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**YOGA vs
PILATES**
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FOR YOU?

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Editor's LETTER



What's your secret? That's a question that often comes up in magazine interviews. And don't get me wrong, I really want to know the answer! What *does* give Gwyneth Paltrow her glow? How *does* Cameron Diaz keep her tum so flat? But I remind myself that there's no exact formula, no single 'secret', for looking and feeling your best. We're all different, and what works for our friends, or for Gwyneth or Cameron, might not work for us. If there's one thing we can be sure of though, it's that optimum wellbeing is a

holistic game. We all know, for instance, that a healthy body and a happy mind go hand in hand. And this month, we've been taking a closer look at the amazing benefits of exercise – proven time and time again to boost your health in all sorts of ways. If you like the sound of that, check out our special this month starting on page 17. We share our unbelievably easy walking workout, plus debate one of the most hotly contested topics here at *Natural Health* HQ: Yoga or Pilates – which one's for you? Let us know which camp you fall into on Twitter @natural_mag or at facebook.com/NaturalHealthMag.

Wishing you a happy, healthy month,

Ceri

Ceri James Editor

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Turn to page 28 for details

WORTH
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Natural Health is your ultimate guide to living a healthy, happy and holistic life. Dedicated to complementary therapies and organic living, it is packed full of inspirational tips and techniques to enhance your mind, body and soul.

Every month, we bring you in-depth news and views on the latest alternative remedies, the best spas, the latest yoga trends, the hottest organic beauty trends, cutting edge nutrition and advice from the world's top self-help gurus and integrated health experts. From aromatherapy to ayurvedic medicine, you'll find it here in *Natural Health*.

Remember this magazine is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice and self-diagnosis is not advised. You should always check with your GP before trying any of the remedies in this magazine and it is important to seek medical approval first, especially if you are pregnant or taking medication.

THIS MONTH...

DEPUTY EDITOR

Allison Jacobs

Our special this month is all about loving your body and moving it more. Since the weather's been (slightly) brighter I've been making an effort to get out and about and move. Walking is one of the easiest ways to boost our bodies, so I love *Rev Up Your Walking Workout* on page 22 – you'll find lots of tips on how to take your stomping to the next level!



FEATURES WRITER

Jessica Harris

As a self-confessed foodie, I'm constantly looking for delicious dinner ideas that I can cook at a moment's notice. I can't wait to try the pizza recipe from Lee Holmes on page 86 as a healthy alternative to something a little more indulgent at the weekend. Light and nutritious, it won't leave you with that guilty food hangover the next day.



EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Lucy Trevallion

This month I jumped on a train out of London and headed to the beautiful East Sussex countryside to review Ashdown Park Country House Hotel. Find out how I got on in 'This Month We've Been' on p117.



CONTENTS

April 2015

32

UP FRONT

11 DIARY

Great dates to put in your planner this month

12 WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

Discover the latest news from the holistic world

LOVE YOUR BODY SPECIAL

18 ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Then get up right now! Your health could depend on it...

20 YOGA OR PILATES?

Unsure which practice is right for you? It all depends on what you want to achieve

22 REV UP YOUR WALKING WORKOUT

You don't need to be thrashing the tarmac to feel the benefits of exercise

24 BE A PLEASURE GODDESS

It's the secret prescription for radiance, vitality and wellbeing says women's health expert Dr Northrup

INNER SELF

32 LIFE, LOVE ETC

Sex, relationships, love and friendship – we've got it covered

35 LYNNE FRANKS

"Being open to transformation isn't always easy, but change needs to be embraced," she explains

37 10 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR BRAIN POWER

Follow these tips and you'll be firing on all cylinders in no time

41 BAREFOOT DOCTOR

"I feel depressed when I watch the news and can't understand how humans can treat one another the way they do. Help!"

42 STOP PROCRASTINATING

Get productive today, says mind guru Magdalena Bak-Maier

47 ON THE COUCH

Top psychologist Dr Nicola Davies introduces us to the hypochondriac personality

YOUR BODY

52 YOGA NEWS

Calm your mind and centre your body with this holistic practice

54 DO THIS, AVOID PMS

Killer cramps, belly bloating and mood swings – no wonder we dread that time of the month but help is at hand

56 ASK THE EXPERTS

We put your questions to our holistic practitioners

58 HEALTH HISTORIES

How does your health past affect your future and present?

Women's wellbeing expert Emma Cannon explains

61 HEAL YOUR GUT

It affects one in five people at some point, but what if food could heal rather than hinder symptoms of IBS?

64 CAROLE CAPLIN

Our holistic lifestyle expert champions new-wave physio to help beat pain



56



NATURAL BEAUTY

71 BLOOMING BEAUTIFUL

Get in the spring spirit with this season's beauty – a burst of clean, fresh and colourful trends

75 FRESH LOOK

New must-have launches for your beauty bag

77 BEAUTY DETECTIVE

Emma van Hinsbergh hunts down the best product for fluttery lashes

79 BEAUTY KNOW-HOW

We pick the brains of the industry's insiders

HEALING FOODS

84 NEWSBITES

The latest in the world of superfoods

86 SUPERCHARGED FOOD RECIPES

Try these indulgent yet super-healthy recipes from holistic nutritionist Lee Holmes

91 UNDER THE GRILL

Is frozen or fresh fruit and veg better for you? Ian Marber investigates

93 9 ANXIETY-BUSTING FOODS

Feel calm and collected with these foods for a healthy nervous system, says medicinal chef Dale Pinnock

97 JO WOOD

Our green guru says go back to your roots (root vegetables that is)

98 AGELESS AGEING

Those cleaning products, plastics and pots and pans could be doing you serious harm, says Jayney Goddard

LIFE & STYLE

102 ECO ZONE

A planet-friendly look at lifestyle, fashion and the home

105 GET DRESSED

Head out in a gorgeous frock from ethical and sustainable African fashion brand Lalessa

111 SPOTLIGHT ON: MACDONALD ELMERS COURT

Natural Health heads to Hampshire for a picturesque spa break

113 FAMILY MATTERS

Janey Lee Grace on the secrets to getting a perfect night's sleep

115 GREEN MACHINE

Safia Minney, founder and CEO of People Tree, on what her mother means to her

117 THIS MONTH WE'VE BEEN...

Our top-rated picks from the world of health

119 OVER TO YOU

Your views plus the chance to win our star prize

122 HOROSCOPES

What do the stars have in store for you this month?

130 IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Try a sugar detox

Exclusive reader treats!

12 WIN A LUXURY SPA DAY FOR TWO WORTH £400

49 WIN A PLACE ON A FABULOUS SPANISH YOGA AND PILATES RETREAT

67 GET 25% OFF AT ABEL AND COLE

121 WIN OVER £1,000 WORTH OF GOODIES

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On the cover

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Introducing *Natural Health's* top panel of leading experts, who are on hand with their insider knowledge and advice every month



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JO WOOD
is a healthy and organic living
expert and creator of her own
natural beauty range



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top health writer
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ayurvedic practitioner



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Next issue on sale 10th April 2015



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5 WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED!

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IN THE MAG

Your ultimate guide to a holistic, organic lifestyle, is on sale every second Friday of the month in all good supermarkets! Can't wait that long? Visit us online at naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk to subscribe and you'll get each one delivered to your door early and hot off the press, plus this month you'll receive a high value gift.



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April *is the month to...*

Keep your finger on the pulse and find out what's new this spring

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY



1



Crab is in season this month. Try mixing the meat with sour cream, oregano and thyme, and then stuffing it into baked mushrooms. Serve it with a crispy salad

If you want to give your Easter treats a healthy boost, try making raw chocolate using cacao powder. It's full of minerals such as magnesium, calcium, zinc, iron, potassium, and manganese

Did you know we get our worst sleep on Monday nights? Try a 10 minute meditation to help clear a busy mind

8

Jojoba oil is a great chemical-free way to remove make-up, especially waterproof mascara



"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud"
Maya Angelou

Spruce up your home with a bouquet of colourful tulips, which are in season right now



17



21

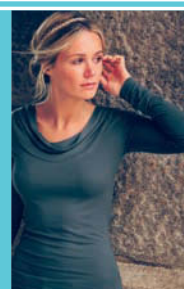


Cameron Diaz is supposedly a big fan of kombucha, an organic, raw drink loaded with probiotics, enzymes and beneficial acids. Try Love Kombucha, £3.45

The birth stone for April is an diamond



We love this casual luxe Bamboo Superfine Burnham Top in Slate, £35, which is from the super ethical British company BAM. See bambooclothing.co.uk to find out more





WIN A LUXURY SPA DAY FOR TWO WORTH £400

Feeling frazzled? Luxury Hampshire hotel and spa Chewton Glen is offering a lucky reader plus a friend the chance to experience deep relaxation in the most opulent of surroundings. To win your choice of two

60-minute treatments (a nurturing kundalini back treatment to unlock dormant energy, or a blissful ananda facial to restore natural radiance) plus day passes to the spa's hydrotherapy pools, aromatherapy saunas and crystal steam rooms, visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk/giveaways, or discover more holistic treats at chewtonglen.com

WHAT'S THE *alternative?*

The latest news from the world of holistic therapies and alternative medicine



NATURAL SOLUTION

Hurray for the latest research into obesity management, which suggests moderate consumption of red wine can help liver function in the overweight.

Scientists at Oregon State University have found extracts from dark-red Muscadine grapes have positive effects on fatty livers; one of the naturally-occurring chemicals, ellagic acid, "dramatically slowed" growth of existing fat cells, echoing previous work by lead biochemist Neil Shay into the benefit of Pinot Noir grapes.

The research suggests those suffering from fatty liver and diabetic symptoms could benefit from eating one and a half cups of dark red grapes per day, or the equivalent portion consumed as grape juice or wine.



Outside the pill box with Dr Anu

I work a rolling rota of 12-hour shifts that regularly involve night-work. Can anything counter the effects?

The negative health impacts of shift work are widely recognised so if night shifts are a necessity, remember some shift patterns are better than others and try to negotiate with your employer. Forward-rotating patterns, in which you move from an early to a late to a nightshift, are least disruptive. I'd argue 12 hours is the maximum one should do. Any longer and the risk of making a mistake

doubles (it trebles after 16!). Make sure to have an 11-hour rest period in between shifts. Most people need at least one hour of sleep for every two hours awake: less than this and you will incur a 'sleep debt'. Fundamental to being a successful night worker is learning to manage your daytime sleep (and fatigue at night). Make sure you start on the right foot with a two-hour nap during the day before you start your first nightshift. Go prepared with a



DID YOU KNOW?

People living near the English coast have higher circulating vitamin D levels than their inland counterparts thanks to increased exposure to sunlight

bottle of water and good-quality, high-protein, fresh food. Caffeinating during the second half of your shift will reduce your chance of sleeping when you get home so don't indulge after the halfway point. During the shift stay in bright light: our body clocks are strongly influenced by the natural cycles of light and dark. After work wear dark glasses before you venture out into natural light, and when you get home use blackout blinds or heavy curtains to block sunlight while you sleep. Be strict about not checking your phone or computer and make plans

during the daytime: you really have to treat daylight hours as your night time. Instead, make your family and friends aware of your shift schedule so that they can include you. If you really struggle to drop off see your doctor for a prescription of melatonin: in one study 5mg melatonin taken at the 'desired bedtime' was shown to improve the sleep and alertness of night-shift workers. But remember, if you find it difficult to adjust or cope with shift work and your physical or mental health is being adversely affected, you need to seek help.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

New research is adding credibility to claims that reiki, the healing touch therapy that channels positive energy, has tangible health benefits. The study, conducted at the University of Huddersfield's Centre for Applied Psychology and Health Research, suggests the Japanese technique lowers levels of anxiety, depression and fatigue in women receiving treatment for cancer.

THE SOUL GURU

Q I've think I've found the love of my life.



The problem is he interrogates me about past relationships and disses women who play the field before settling down. I don't want to lie but I'm scared the truth will send him packing. How much should I share?

A Jules advises: It's no coincidence modern culture broaches this subject so often; it's a direct value-system mirror for ultimately how we judge ourselves. When we're faced with losing something we love it gives us a golden opportunity to work on understanding ourselves to a deeper level.


There is a fine balance here between being happy with divulging information you can feel comfortable with, and lying out of fear. There is also a fine balance between what you are comfortable owning and what the other person is capable at this present moment of owning. That balance of the two is individual to you and your partner.

If you write down the fears you have of being judged and how that will make you feel, you can start releasing old patterns and beliefs. Making peace with the choices you've made will allow you to have a more direct conversation with your partner (abandonment fears are driven from self-worth issues). You can then share what you are happy with and get him to take possession of his own judgements and fears. The affirmation 'I love, value and approve of myself' will help.

juleswilliams.com

Got a question for Jules?

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WHAT'S THE *alternative?*



IN THERAPY

THIS MONTH: *Reflexology*
TESTED BY: Amy Waterhouse

At street level, the Gina Conway Aveda Lifestyle Salon and Spa is a bustling hairdressers, but below ground it's an atmospheric spa with a network of corridors leading to treatment rooms. Lying comfortably on the bed, I explained to my therapist my areas of concern – my digestion (which is often irritable) and my knotty shoulders and neck. She explained that reflexology will help the body to heal itself by moving blocked energy, so she would pay attention to these areas. The gentle foot massage and manipulation was so relaxing that I fell asleep! She recommended an actual physical massage too, because there had been a lot of 'crystals' (these feel crunchy when massaged – yikes!) around the corresponding shoulder areas. I left feeling really relaxed yet refreshed and will definitely be back for more! Visit ginaconwaysalons.co.uk

Gestalt, sometimes translated as 'whole', is a psychological approach built on a holistic view of our environment and relationships



THERAPY FOCUS *Bowen Technique*

WHAT IS IT?

This gentle touch therapy is based on the approach of Australian healer Tom Bowen, who found subtle and slow movements more successful than invasive massage in treating muscular injuries and back pain. Since his death in 1982 several of his students have taken forward their own interpretation of his techniques.

METHODS

After a consultation to identify problem areas, the therapist administers gentle rolling movements, often with fingertips



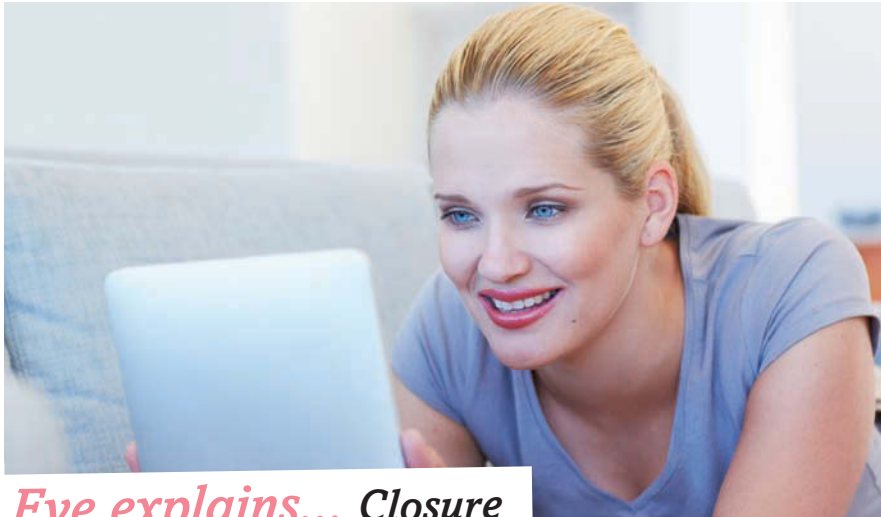
DID YOU KNOW?

After successful early trials, research is going ahead to develop a diagnostic breath test to catch the early signs of Parkinson's disease

and thumbs, over muscles and soft tissue – ligaments, tendons and fascias. Regular pauses are built into the treatment to allow the body to 'reset' and sessions are deliberately scheduled five to ten days apart to allow muscles to process subtle changes.

BENEFITS

As a drug-free, pain-free and relaxing alternative to more drastic measures the Bowen Technique is classically deployed as a first resort to alleviate muscular pain and back conditions. It is however, according to the Bowen Therapy Professional Association, "effective in treating conditions with a number of sources as the muscles are relieved of stress from a very deep level". Find out more at bowen-therapy.co



Eve explains... Closure

The 'friend' who made my high school years miserable has popped up on Facebook with a friend request and breezy message suggesting we meet. Will venting my resentment bring closure?

Eve Menezes Cunningham explains



Ouch. Yet, this is an opportunity for potential healing. Honour your teenage self. You want to unleash years of anger? Do it! Not by acting out, or even necessarily letting her know how you feel, but by giving yourself a day, afternoon or even an hour to process some of your feelings around it. It may take less time. It may take longer.

Dig out a picture of yourself from then and offer 'younger you' hugs, love, support and advice from adult you's vantage point. Maybe stamp your feet, punch pillows and write a letter to her letting it all out. Don't send this letter but express yourself in a way you probably couldn't as a child.

(Safely) burning or ripping this letter to shreds can release stuck energy.

There may still be things you want to express directly. Maybe you'll want to meet up and catch up! It's possible that she wants to make amends. It's also possible that she has no idea of the misery she caused you. And of course it's possible that she hasn't changed. You can use this opportunity to actually support yourself no matter what.

Only you know the best course of action but by allowing yourself time to process all the anger, rage, hurt, rejection and pain, you can decide whether you want to a) ignore her request, b) accept it, ignoring her request to meet, and be a

little nosy, or c) express (in an adult, empowered way – you don't want to give your power away now) the hurt and see how she responds before deciding.

You are an adult. You have survived. You can choose what feels right for you today. If you reject it now and feel better about things in time, you might even search for her name. If you accept it now and see she hasn't changed, well, you can easily de-friend her.

Find out more about Eve's holistic therapies for your mind, body, heart and soul (and sign up for 25% off your first individual session) at feelbettereveryday.co.uk or phone 07584 354963

IT'S RAINING ZEN!

If an invigorating shower is central to your morning ritual you'll be concerned to hear chemical chlorine and dissolved mineral ions in your water can have a harsh and drying effect on your skin. Step up this sleek bit of kit from The Sensitive Skincare Company; the Eco Chrome Shower Filter (£49.95) clicks into your unit to filter out nasties, leaving you with a deluge as soft as spring rain. sensitiveskincareco.com



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and give your health
regime a spring clean

18 ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Then get up right now! Your
health could depend on it

20 YOGA OR PILATES?

Unsure which practice is right
for you? It all depends on what
you want to achieve...

22 REV UP YOUR WALK

Walking is one of the best
workouts to improve fitness,
torch fat and tone up

24 GODDESSES NEVER AGE


Find out why bring a pleasure
goddess is the key to radiance
and vitality



For more wellness tips visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk

Are you sitting **COMFORTABLY?**

Then get up right now! Your health could depend on it, as Allison Jacobs explains

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light grey cardigan over a pink top and white pants, is sitting on a light-colored wooden ledge. She is smiling and looking towards the camera, holding a white mug in her right hand. Her left hand is resting on the ledge. A second white mug sits on the ledge to her right.

It's something all of us do every day at home, at work, on the commute – in fact just about anywhere we can manage it. But we've been doing a little too much of it and now it's official: sitting down for too long is really, really bad for you. "The costs to your health are huge; it can lead to de-conditioning of the musculoskeletal system, cardiovascular system and impairment of the gastro intestinal system," says leading physiotherapist and co-founder of yourphysioplan.com Denise Kesson. "Therapists treat thousands of patients every year for symptoms caused by sitting disease, with lower back pain being the most common, followed by neck and shoulder pain."

So why is something so seemingly natural and innocuous as sitting so destructive to human health? "The body is mechanical and has been designed over millennia to move regularly through a range of dynamic movements. As such, it strongly exercises a use-it-or-lose-it policy," says Denise. "If in a typical 24 hour period you sleep for eight hours, sit at a desk for eight hours and watch TV for four hours, you are not moving enough!"

Indeed, Swedish scientists linked daily sitting to a greater risk of heart attack, a German study found excessive sitting softens the skeleton and a US experiment revealed

that sitting leads to elevated triglycerides, one of the components of bad cholesterol. Scarily, a recent review of 43 previous studies concluded that full-time sitters had raised risks of developing colon, endometrial and lung cancer. Some experts say that for every hour you sit in a chair, you knock two off your lifespan.

But, while the list of evidence is huge, it's largely unhelpful other than to illustrate the point that sitting is bad. What you really need to know is what you can do about it. Among the doom there is hope... the answer, of course, is to move more. Here are Denise's tips to counteract all that chair perching:

- 🕒 The 20 minute rule – if you have been sitting still for 20 minutes stand up and stretch properly, arching your back.
- 🕒 Introduce rotation – most of our everyday tasks involve movements in a straight line, depriving our bodies of rotational movements which they love! Every hour, alternate rotating your neck and then your body to the right and left three times each way.
- 🕒 Walk for 30 minutes every day – this has been clinically proven to make a huge difference to our general wellbeing. Not only has it been shown to improve your musculoskeletal health, it reduces the effects of arthritis, dementia, diabetes, anxiety, depression, risk of death and fatigue. Using the words of renowned Dr Mike Evans: "Limit your sitting and sleeping to just 23 and a half hours a day!"

"A recent study found that sitting down all day raises your risk of developing colon, endometrial and lung cancer"

Fix your fascia

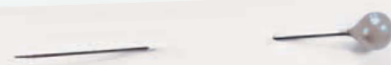
Many of the problems caused by a life spent parked on your derrière are due to the restrictions it places on your body's fascial system.

"Fascia is a continuous structure which covers and interpenetrates every muscle, bone, nerve, blood vessel and internal organ," explains Denise. "It facilitates the function of the musculoskeletal system. But sitting can create points of tension and load through it, which can lead to restriction in joint movements and bodily functions."

Craniosacral therapists, such as Jo O'Flanagan, an expert at Nelsons Homeopathic Pharmacy, believe that this fibrous tissue, made mostly of collagen, can communicate with the whole body.

"The fascia holds memory, and wants to be released," she says.

"The longer a problem with it goes untreated, the deeper it can go."



Try this!

"The clever thing about fascia is it doesn't require very much pressure to release it," says Jo.

"Place your fingertips on the area that's troubling you with no more pressure than corks in water then gently allow your index finger and middle finger to separate very slowly.

"Another good release exercise is to place your index and middle finger into the occiput (between the base of your skull and the top of your neck) and your other hand very gently on the affected area just for about 10 seconds. This can be repeated twice."

GET A HELPING HAND TO GET YOU ON YOUR FEET

- Forward-thinking companies like Google, Twitter and Facebook offer employees the option of having an adjustable standing desk, at which they can stand for all or part of the working day. Reported benefits include increased staff productivity and no more 3pm slumps. If you want to have the choice to alternate between sitting and standing, you can find an adjustable desk from around £466 at posturite.co.uk
- The UP24 by Jawbone Wristband (£69.99, amazon.co.uk) is an activity and sleep tracking device which can be set to vibrate and alert you to the fact you haven't gotten up in half an hour, or however long you want to set it for (just check that you have a compatible phone as the device only syncs with newer models).
- It's been said before, but if you can, walk rather than take the car, lift or escalator. It's small but constant movement which keeps the body healthy, rather than long periods of inactivity interspersed with vigorous exercise.
- Practice movement that realigns and stretched out your body such as yoga.

Denise Kesson is co-founder of YourPhysioPlan.com

Yoga OR Pilates?

Unsure which practice is right for you? It all depends on what you want to achieve...

To the outsider, it's easy to see why yoga and Pilates are often lumped into the same category. Both feature purposeful poses, floor work in a non-aerobic sense, and a gentle pace which make them accessible to beginners. So if you've always fancied taking up one or the other, get brainstorming your exercise goals and see which discipline the experts recommend...

GOAL Improve flexibility and balance **Choose:** BOTH

"The physical practice of yoga was designed to allow the practitioner to sit for long periods in meditation without feeling uncomfortable in their body," explains Vicky Holmstock, yoga and holistic expert at Results With Lucy (resultswithlucy.com). "Yoga has a strong focus on flexibility that is not seen in other exercise, and as classes are heavily focused on developing flexibility, this will allow progression in each of the postures."

"For balance, Pilates is great as it strengthens the core of the body, which gives more stability in all movement. In yoga, balances are practiced more than they are in Pilates, but tend to be static (you hold still in a balance for 5-10 breaths, for example). In a functional sense Pilates is better because it's closer to how we move in real life and where we would need better balance," she says.

GOAL Weight loss **Choose:** YOGA

"Only specific types of yoga though; the more dynamic ones like power yoga or vinyassa, as these give you a good cardio workout and involve almost constant movement and breath," says Ian Chapman, Pilates and yoga instructor for interactive online provider of both disciplines, yoogaia.com.

GOAL Banish stress

Choose: YOGA

"Yoga is particularly good for combating stress," says Vicky. "The focus on deep breathing has a very real, physiological effect on the nervous system which induces a relaxed state within the body. Practitioners learn how to use their breath to bring about a calm state and to clear their mind."

"Any form of exercise will boost your mood," says Ian. "If you do a slower form of yoga, one that focuses on meditation, then this can have a powerful calming effect. It tends to draw more on the spiritual side of things while Pilates focuses solely on core strength and conditioning." So for a holistic chill-out, grab that mat, get stretching and feel the stress just melt away as you practise some soothing asanas.

"Because yoga is holistic, it strengthens all the different systems of the body, rather than just working on the muscles like Pilates"

GOAL Tone up

Choose: PILATES

"Pilates is great for toning the body because it combines body weight exercises with props, such as stability balls and bands," says Vicky.

"Definitely Pilates," agrees Scott Laidler, personal trainer to Hollywood stars (scottlaidler.com). "The resistance element

can help tone and sculpt muscles, giving the appearance of a toned muscular body. Yoga may be known for its hot, toned bodies, but these physiques were probably created in the gym, with yoga as a sideline to regular training."

GOAL Boost immune system

Choose: BOTH

"Both forms of exercise will actually improve your immune system simply by making your body stronger, and a stronger body means a better immune system," says Ian. "I would go for a more dynamic Pilates over a slower version and the same with yoga – challenge your body to go the extra mile and get strong at the same time!"

Vicky points out that while both have benefits, because yoga is holistic, it strengthens all the different systems of the body, rather than just working on the muscles like Pilates. "Yoga massages the internal organs and systems of the body as well as strengthening it in a physical sense," she explains.

GOAL Recover from illness

Choose: YOGA

"Yoga is wonderful for people recovering from illness because it teaches how to relax and rest. The postures can be very gentle and soothing, while still allowing the participant to become stronger and fitter," says Vicky.

Ian is in agreement: "If you have been unwell, you really need to go easy on your exercise, no matter what form it takes, as your immune system may be compromised and strenuous exercise may hamper your recovery," he says. "So a gentle yoga meditation may be the way to go, where you stretch carefully without raising your heart rate too much. Similarly a gentle Pilates core workout may help ease your body back to wellness."

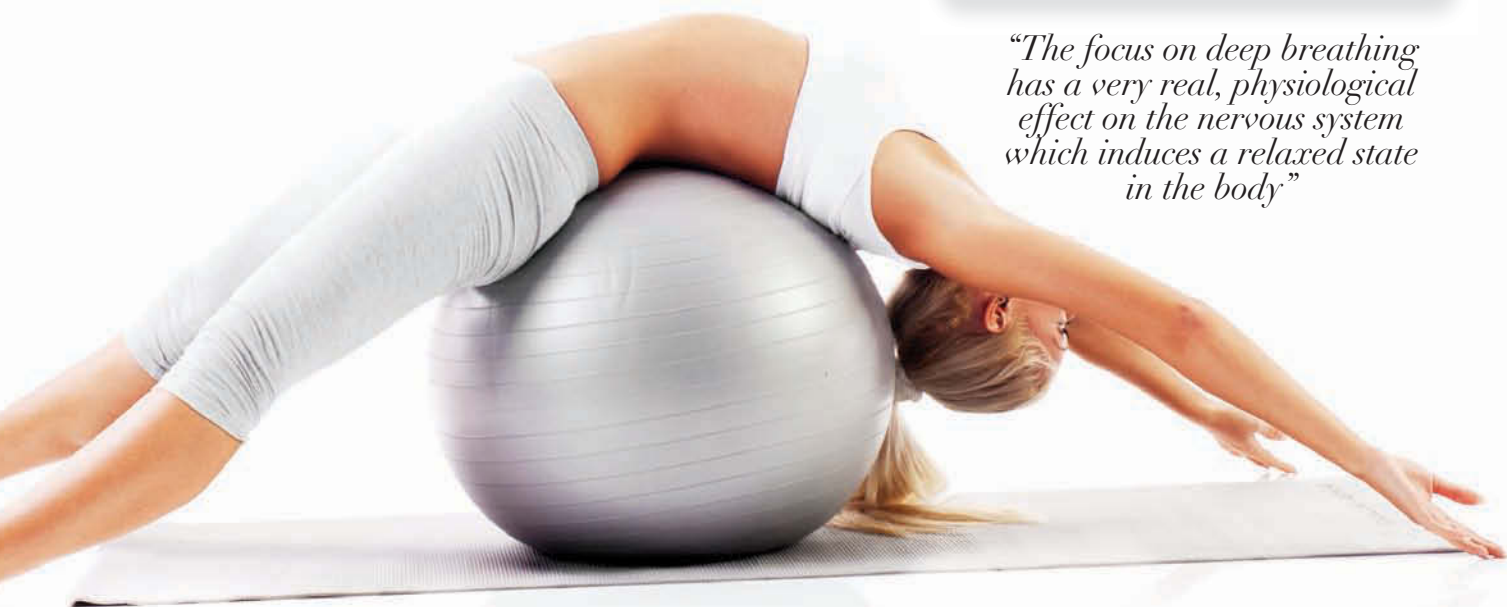
And Scott says if you're feeling up to it, turning up the heat may help too: "Bikram yoga heats the body and cleanses the skin, which may have a therapeutic effect that helps speed up recovery and fight off illness."

GOAL Improve strength

Choose: BOTH

"Pilates and yoga are both great for improving strength. Pilates is particularly core-focused which makes it great for strengthening backs, while yoga works a wider range of muscles in a wider range of positions," says Vicky. "Pilates definitely has the upper hand for strengthening both the transverse abdomens, which is your core, and your rectus abdominus, which is your six-pack! Floor Pilates will also improve leg and glute strength," explains Ian. "But for upper body strength, yoga tends to use more body weight to work the muscles of the arms, shoulders, chest and back. Styles of yoga like Iyengar hold asanas for up to a few minutes at a time so will be very strengthening."

"The focus on deep breathing has a very real, physiological effect on the nervous system which induces a relaxed state in the body"



REV UP YOUR WALKING WORKOUT



You don't need to be thrashing the tarmac to feel the benefits of exercise. It may be second nature but walking is one of the best workouts to improve fitness levels, torch fat and tone up

1 GO OUTSIDE

Instead of mindlessly clocking miles on the treadmill, why not go back to basics and enjoy what nature has to offer? According to a study from the University of Michigan, nature walks are linked to enhanced mental health and positivity, as well as significantly lowering levels of depression and feelings of stress.



2

ADD SOME WEIGHT
Make your leisurely walk a little more challenging with a set of light ankle weights. Not only will you burn five to 15 percent more calories you'll also encourage greater muscle activation and tone up your thighs and bum.



3

SET A GOAL
Whether it's a charity race or losing a couple of pounds, if you have an end goal in sight with a specific time frame you're more likely to find the motivation to keep going. Penning your progress in a journal will allow you to feel a sense of pride of how far you've come and give you the push to exceed your expectations.

4

HIT IT
Mixing up your speeds will raise your heart rate which will, in turn, improve your fitness levels and torch fat at a higher rate. Try this workout plan to make the most of your march.

MINUTES	ACTIVITY	EFFORT LEVEL (1 TO 10)
0-5	Easy warm-up walk	3
5-15	Moderate walk	5
15-17	Brisk walk	8
17-27	Moderate walk	5
27-29	Brisk walk	8
29-39	Easy cool-down walk	3

5

HEAD FOR THE HILLS

What if you stopped avoiding that scary-looking incline and tackled it head-on? By forcing your muscles to work harder you'll burn calories, lose weight and tone the backs of your legs, thighs and glutes. Unlike running it won't put a strain on your joints but do make sure you have a lengthy stretch afterwards to avoid injury.

6

STRETCH IT OUT

OK, you may not be running a marathon but stretching is just as important before and after a walk as higher intensity workouts. Using a few yoga-based moves such as downward dog and triangle pose will help flush lactic acid out of your muscles which reduces stiffness and keeps you feeling ready to get out there again the next day.

7

BUDDY UP

There's nothing better than a good catch-up with friends over a cuppa. But why not shake things up and take the gossip to the great outdoors? Researchers at the Kansas State University found that those who workout with a friend or partner increased their workout time and intensity by as much as 200 percent. This is because you're less likely to cancel and your mind will be on the conversation rather than the activity itself making it a no-brainer!

9



WORK THE CIRCUIT

Your surroundings can provide you with all of the exercise equipment you need for a head-to-toe workout. Pausing to do some tricep dips on a park bench or simply lunge walking up that hill will add another dimension to your walk whilst toning up different areas of the body. If you have limited supplies around you, take a resistance band with you and do some bicep curls every 10 minutes.

8

TAKE IT OFF-ROAD

Varying your terrain will not only make the journey more interesting but it'll also keep your muscles guessing. By opting for a rougher trail route, you'll engage your core and use different muscles in your legs to keep you steady.

10



STEP TO THE BEAT

There's a reason why those gym bunnies are energetically tapping their foot or nodding their head during their workout, and it's because music can encourage us to train harder. Research conducted at Brunel University has confirmed that listening to your favourite tunes while you exercise could increase your endurance by up to 15 percent. Just be careful not to sing that power ballad too loud in public!

The PLEASURE SECRET

It's the secret prescription for radiance, vitality and wellbeing says women's health expert **Dr Christiane Northrup**

Most of us have learned well how to make our bodies conform to the needs of our minds. Our entire educational system is set up this way. In our school days, we taught ourselves to sit still in our chairs, use the bathroom only during designated breaks, and devote all our attention to the teacher. Discipline, or training ourselves through practice to develop a habit, keeps us focused on doing what we think we're supposed to do. However, we're not designed simply to think about and take actions that support everyday survival, or that please others. Nor are we designed to sit still in chairs for hours, staring at screens. Our brains are wired to allow us to connect with the life force and experience rejuvenating pleasure for ourselves. We have forgotten the importance of pleasure and we need to remember how to experience it regularly – as a daily part of life.

The pleasure molecule

Cells in our brains, blood, blood vessels, and lungs produce a signaling molecule, or gas, called nitric oxide or NO (not to be confused with the nitrous oxide used in dentistry, better known as laughing gas). The production of nitric oxide is triggered by laughter, orgasm, and other experiences of pleasure, as well as by eating fruits and vegetables high in antioxidants, meditating, and exercising (nitric oxide is at work in the sensation of “runner's high”). Nitric oxide relaxes blood vessel walls, which allows the vessels to widen and encourages more blood to flow through them.

The sensation of nitric oxide being released lasts only a few seconds, but it is a marvelous few seconds! It sets off a chain reaction of other feel-good chemicals in the body. You feel a shift in your energy and an exquisite sense of relaxation. After its release into the system, nitric oxide works with anticoagulants to prevent strokes, signals white blood cells to fight infections and destroy tumors, balances levels of neurotransmitters, and reduces cellular inflammation. The more often your body creates and releases nitric oxide, the softer, more flexible, and wider your blood vessels become because you've trained them to relax. Your circulation improves. Saying yes to NO

actually helps your body function better and avoid serious illness and disease. Pleasure leads to yet more pleasure. Life renews itself, while anger, fear, and grief suck the life out of you.

You deserve it

We've been taught that anything pleasurable is suspect. We say “it's a guilty pleasure,” or “we're having too much fun.” The thought of simply enjoying ourselves, savoring sensual experiences, makes us look over our shoulders for the pleasure police.

I remember when I was married, I used to avoid telling my husband if I was going to get a massage. It felt so decadent and self-indulgent; as if self-indulgence is a bad thing. I thought he wouldn't agree with my spending money on something ‘frivolous’ like a massage. He never actually criticized me for doing this, but I had internalised the cultural message that women shouldn't ‘waste’ money on their own pleasure.

It's important not just to get the massage but to get it without feeling guilt. If you hesitate to spend the money, find a discounted way to get a massage. One woman's husband signed up for text messages from the local beauty school so he could be alerted to discounted same-day massages and set them up for her. It's a really smart man who knows the value of making his woman feel deliciously relaxed.

How to get pleasure

Any pleasure can be yours if you own it. Kids make believe all the time, but as adults, we've been taught to feel self-conscious about exercising one of our biggest sources of pleasure – imagination! The pleasure centres in your brain don't know that you don't actually own the hot tub at the hotel when you lower yourself into it. They don't know →

WINGWOMEN

I strongly believe in having 'wingwomen' who support you in making time for pleasure. Get a friend or two to commit to going with you to a group meditation, organic food tasting, or folk dancing night at the community centre so you'll encourage each other not to break the date.

TRY THIS

PEAK PLEASURE

Think back to two or three moments in your life when you experienced peak pleasure. Take some time to recall those moments in exquisite detail. Re-create the smells, sounds, sensory details, and emotional experiences you had. Regenerate the feelings and relive every tasty moment. The body makes no distinction between the actual event and what you're imagining, so in re-creating these moments, you alter your biochemistry and release nitric oxide, endorphins, and serotonin that stimulate circulation and cellular repair. As a teen, I went on a canoe trip in the spring and accidentally overturned the canoe. I had to spend the rest of the trip soaking wet and freezing. We finally got to a hotel where I could take a hot bath, and to this day, I remember the comfort of that bath in sharp contrast to the bone-marrow-deep cold I had experienced leading up to that moment of warmth. If everything were pleasurable, you'd get bored and stop enjoying the simple delights of life, such as being dry, warm, and comfortable. Think back to a time when the contrast between displeasure and the pleasure created afterward was powerful for you. Relive that moment. In this way, you can train yourself to not be jaded – and learn to truly draw pleasure from small moments.

→ that the painting on the wall at an art museum isn't yours to keep. They only know that in that moment, you're in heaven enjoying the experience.

And dance! Goddesses move their bodies. Every indigenous culture has used dance to celebrate life. We heal through dance, movement, sound, and tears.

I dance in my living room, which is in the exact feng shui center of my home. (Feng shui is the Chinese art of placement to enhance the flow of life force in a space.) For more than 30 years, the space was used only during the holidays, so most of the time, it was essentially empty of life. Then I removed the furniture so I could use the room, which has a hardwood floor, as a dance or yoga studio. Now I use it regularly, with friends.

You can do this too. Open your home, your heart, and your front room. Life isn't meant to be lived with plastic covers on the couch or a veil of grief dampening your spirits.

Commit this to memory: experiencing pleasure is crucial for vibrant health. It is not selfish. It's a gift to yourself and the people around you. Your joy gives them permission to experience joy too. It creates an ever-broadening circle of celebration and joy that spreads out from you in waves, lifting up everyone.



*Pleasure
pursuits are
important.
We are
taught that
good women
spend their
free time
endlessly
giving,
selflessly
serving, never
caring about
themselves*

RADIATE PLEASURE!

Your nature is joyous radiance. You don't have to ask permission to seek or receive pleasure. Your happiness serves the world and yourself, keeping your vibrational energy high.

Here's how it works: Your heart's electromagnetic field reaches out from your body and interacts with the field of energy we all share – you're actually wired to reach out and connect to pleasure. This energy field radiates throughout the universe via the electromagnetic field. Scientists know about these fields, but don't necessarily think of them metaphysically. They've discovered the Higgs Boson particle, which is the evidence theoretical physicists have been searching for because it explains how energy coalesces into matter. Some have called it 'the God particle.' When you have fun, your energy changes and so does the field around you, and that shapes physical reality – creating nitric oxide and endorphins in your own body. How that energy of pleasure manifests in the physical world outside your body is a marvelous mystery.

So adopt this motto: Fun is important. Fun is what keeps you ageless. Dream up a pleasurable adventure, get out there and do it, and chances are someone else will do it with you. Take a tango lesson. Book the cabin for a girlfriends' weekend in the woods during the dark months of winter. Pull out the card game or board

game, get some people together, and laugh yourself silly over a trivia question.

The time for pleasure is now. I remember when I finished my medical residency at age 30. I'd been a nonstop student since I was in nursery and now my peers were choosing postdoctoral specialties. I wondered when I would get a chance to stop and finally have some fun in the present instead of someday. I'd had enough. I said no to doing a gynecology subspecialty fellowship. It was time to live my life. How about you?

Learning tango or singing in public may not be giving food to the homeless or helping as a hospice volunteer, but these pleasurable pursuits are important. We're taught that good women spend their free time endlessly giving, selflessly serving, never caring about themselves. Tango is all about me, and feeling pleasure, but my dancing the tango gives others permission to indulge in their own gratification. Dancing is a form of healing – in fact, any ecstatic experience can be healing not just for you but for others.

Therapy is good to help you think differently and break patterns of pessimistic thinking or negative self-talk. But we have to be joyful, dance, and bring pleasure into our lives deliberately.

Life's too short. Get in touch with what really makes you feel good. Become an ageless alpha goddess of pleasure. In fact, make pleasure a sacrament. That will be a gift to yourself and the world.

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Inner Self

REVEAL YOUR HIDDEN DEPTHS

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

A study conducted by Jean-Philippe Gouin, a Concordia psychology professor, has shown that friendships make you healthier. Fittingly, this can be measured by your heart. Gouin's study showed that when put in a new environment, people who formed social bonds experienced an increased heart rate variability (a marker of how well our nervous system is functioning) compared to those who remained isolated.



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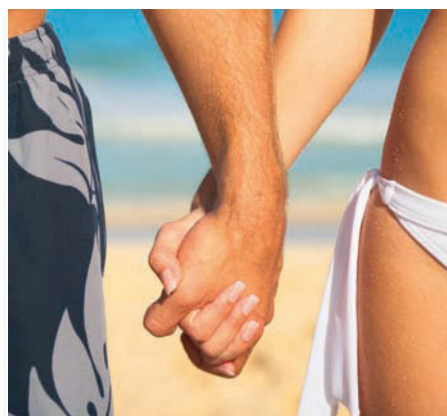
SLEEP SECRETS

The most common sleep position for couples is back-to-back without touching, says a study by relationship psychologist Corinne Sweet, showing closeness and independence in the relationship.



LIFE LOVE etc

Our monthly look at the world of love, friendship and sex



TIME TRIALS

11 months and 24 days has been hailed as the start of the 'comfort zone' in a relationship. Key signs you've entered the zone include allowing your other half to see you when ill, without make-up on and in your lounging clothes*, apparently.

Soul SEARCHING "I don't feel sexy"

Q I've always had difficulty thinking of myself as a sexual woman and this has had a detrimental effect on my relationships with men. Can you help?

A It is quite common for women to feel indifferent, disgusted or ashamed of sex and to shut their sexuality down so that they don't feel sexual.

Well done for acknowledging the problem and seeking help. Having taken that journey from disgust to delight in sexuality, I can assure you it's worth the effort. Even if we are single, our sexual nature is a fundamental part of us and to embrace it increases our wellbeing.

Women disown their sexuality for many reasons such as negative messages we got as children or teenagers, or lack of encouragement



JAN DAY

Jan leads workshops focused on conscious relationships and sexuality. Her teaching has a deep understanding and a warm-hearted appreciation for people's need to find and learn to trust their own journeys. janday.com

or information that we needed as teenagers. And the transition from girl to woman is more often experienced with shame and confusion than celebration. Sadly, many women have also experienced abusive or insensitive sexual touch that leads them to numb out and to believe that sex is an unpleasant experience.

Depending on the cause of your problem with this, there are different ways forward. Go out, ideally with a close girlfriend, and try on a range of clothes that are a bit sexier than you'd normally choose. Notice how you feel trying them and seeing yourself in them. Being open to the feelings is really important.

Make a date night with yourself and treat yourself as a sexy woman. Start with a bath, dress up



for yourself, try stroking and touching yourself in the most pleasurable ways you can imagine. Dance for yourself and look at yourself in a mirror enjoying your body and how it moves.

Buy some sexy underwear and wear it regularly under your normal clothes. Enjoy that only you know and the feelings that arise.

Write stories about sexual ideas. Let yourself be as uninhibited as possible and use it to explore of what you might enjoy. Go into as much detail as possible when the story feels good.

Whichever of these you choose, I suggest keeping a journal for yourself to be there encouraging yourself. Most of all, this is a journey of courage to open to all your feelings and sensations and to be as soft, loving and understanding to yourself as you would be if a young teenage girl came to you asking for help.

DID YOU KNOW?

After an initial decline, sexual frequency for married couples increases after 50 years of being together

“It is quite common for women to feel indifferent, disgusted or ashamed of sex”

The LOVE CLINIC

Somatic Mindfulness

Good sex requires us to be aware of what's happening in our bodies. Mindfulness is a great way to learn to reconnect with your body and has become a buzzword. It simply means the practice of observing what is happening in the moment. Mindfulness not only helps us to be more aware of our thoughts, feelings and sensations but also helps create neural change for positive growth.



MIKE LOUSADA
is a psychosexual bodyworker specialising in treating women with intimacy issues
mikelousada.com

Leading neuroscientist Daniel Siegel states that regular practice of mindfulness helps in “regulating our bodies, attuning to others, having emotional balance, calming fear, pausing before acting, having insight and empathy, being moral in our thinking and our actions, and having more access to intuition.” These are the effects that can be gained from bringing your awareness to something and observing it without judgment.

Mindfulness is effectively a form of meditation without the necessity of the spiritual trappings that put many people off. Spiritual traditions have understood this for millennia, especially in the East where meditation had been most commonly practiced until recent times. Now the age old wisdom of philosophies such as Buddhism and Hinduism are gaining ground in the West.

There are many studies that demonstrate that both meditation and mindfulness increase our sense of well-being, help us to feel calmer and actually physically change the neural pathways in your brain.

One form of mindfulness is to focus on your thoughts and simply observe them as you sit or lie quietly. This can be very helpful in raising awareness of your thought processes and mental beliefs. This is all part of increasing awareness, which is one of my golden rules for all self-development work.

Try this more body-based approach instead of simply observing thoughts. Focus on your bodily sensations and on any feelings that you notice as you do so. Scan your body up from the soles of your feet. Notice areas that feel full or tight and other areas that feel empty or drained of energy. When you find something of interest simply keep your attention there and notice what happens.

Since this practice is about what you felt in your body we call it Somatic Mindfulness. “Somatic” simply means “relating to the body” and because the body is so integral to sex it is essential that we learn to focus our attention on the body and notice, without judgment, what arises for us during the process.

This simple practice is a great way to come into the experience of your body and to help you to be present, which is one of the keys of having great sex.

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Lynne Franks

BEING OPEN TO TRANSFORMATION ISN'T ALWAYS EASY

I'm sure it's no co-incidence that I was born around Easter.

As a typical Aries – naive, full of ideas, pushing forward with my ram's horns – I'm not always the most subtle of women but I do have lots of ideas and an ability to bring them mostly to fruition (even if I may drop a few balls on the way).

So creating projects, watching them come to life and then take on their own energy which can often appear as a death and rebirth in a different form, to reappear at a later time, is something I have become quite used to over my 40 and more years of working.

Resurrection is of course the main Easter theme, although like many modern-day religious festivals, it has pagan roots, when the ancient deities represented nature's cycles of birth, life, death and rebirth. Like Passover, celebrating when the Jews came out of Egypt as slaves and miraculously crossed the Red Sea to re-emerge as free people, this time of year is when we can look ahead and celebrate life's great changes.

Time for change

But being open to transition and transformation isn't always easy for us mere mortals. It's easier to be in denial of the more serious aspects of this time of new beginnings and like everything in modern life, trivialise the origins of what is actually a great time to learn and grow.

Easter has become a period of intense commerciality, with endless cards, hot cross buns, chocolate eggs and bunnies on sale for months previously. Any regard for the deeper myths from this time of the year, such as the Sumerian goddess Inanna being hung naked on a stake and subsequently resurrected and ascended from numerous adventures in the underworld, have completely disappeared.

The Greek god Dionysus was a divine child, resurrected by his grandmother. He also brought his mother Semele back to life. Many other legends of resurrection appear in ancient cultural Spring festivals. One thing they all agree is that this period began as a day of blood, rising in energy for



*Change is constant and it just
needs to be embraced*

three days until the resurrection. Even the dates are influenced by the moon cycles which reverts back to pagan customs.

Clearly thousands of years of cultural change have passed since we started using the beginning of Spring to acknowledge that it is time to let go of our old ways and sow new seeds to bring in fresh beginnings. And, interestingly, how the three days of blood ruled by the moon co-incide with the moon cycles of menstruation.

So as I come near to my birthday, I have been asking myself what new beginnings I should be moving towards this Easter. I am, as always, juggling a number of projects and activities and sensing which ones to energise...

Future plans

I am thrilled that I will be with all my children, their partners and my grandchildren at home in Mallorca and I am quite sure that Easter egg hunts will be part of our activities, alongside a Passover meal and prayers to Mother Earth and the power of the sacred feminine.

I also think on a deeper level that this year is a great one for personal and professional transformation. As I approach my 67th birthday I am by no means thinking of retirement but I am thinking of change.

The same questions come up for me most years – where should I be living, what career should I follow, will I be with a partner and companion this year. But one thing I am learning is that I don't need to know all the answers.

My eleven-year old granddaughter Lola asked me the other day "What are my dreams, Grandma?" When I told her, she said just pray every day and give thanks for your incredible life. And she is right. Change is constant and it just needs to be embraced.

So this April, while celebrating the start of Spring and new beginnings, I will of course give gratitude for all the many experiences of love and growth I have experienced over the past 12 months. Of which there have been many. How about listing yours?

Find out more

Learn about Lynne Franks' BLOOM Wellbeing Retreats in Mallorca and the UK by visiting bloomretreats.com

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10 ways to boost your Brain Power

Memory not quite what it used to be? Follow these tips and you'll be firing on all cylinders in no time

Did you know that you lose thousands of brain cells every day and that over the course of your life you can expect to lose up to seven percent of your total brain cell count? While it's a pretty scary thought, however, flagging mind power isn't an inescapable fact of life. Many experts believe that the reason your memory gets worse as you get older is not simply a natural degenerative process, but also because of neglect – and that a few health and lifestyle adjustments can make all the difference.

EAT WELL

Fats make up 60 percent of the brain so it stands to reason that the better the fat in the diet, the better the brain. Our favourite brain-boosting foods are oily fish such as mackerel and sardines. "Fish oils – omega 3s in particular – help maintain brain cells and build stronger and better connections between them," says Professor Ian Robertson, author of *Stay Sharp With The Mind Doctor* (£8.99, Vermilion). "Brightly coloured fruits and vegetables such as strawberries, blueberries and spinach can also help improve communication between brain cells and maintain healthy cells in the older brain."

REMEMBER A FACE

Are you one of those people who forgets someone's name just moments after you've been introduced? Try to link the person with some other defining detail – colour of hair or clothing, for example, or the tone of the person's voice. "The more associations that exist in your memory store, the greater the number of angles from which you can access this memory and the easier it will be to recall," says Joel Levy, author of *Boost Your Memory Power* (9.99, Cico).



EAT CURRY

One of the main spices in curry powder, turmeric, could help to improve your memory. Traditionally used in ayurvedic medicine, it contains a compound called curcumin, a polyphenols antioxidant that can help to prevent brain degeneration and inflammation. What better excuse do you need for a spicy vindaloo than that?

PLANT POWER

The traditional Chinese remedy ginkgo biloba has been shown to boost mental capacity and memory ability.

"Studies suggest that it is capable of improving cognitive function as demonstrated by increased mental sharpness, better concentration, and improved memory," says

top integrative medical doctor, Dr Andrew Weil. Others to try include the ayurvedic herb ashwaganda, which could help to regenerate damaged neurons in the brain and improve alertness, and lemon balm, which research has found can increase the activity of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that improves your ability to learn and store info.

HAVE A TIPPLE

Although knocking back several large G&Ts a night actually harms your brain, a glass of wine a day (extra points if you make it organic) could actually boost your memory. French researchers found that women who drank two or more glasses of wine daily were 2.5 times more likely to score in the top 10 percent in tests. This could be due to the high

level of antioxidants called polyphenols in red wine which combat free radicals damage that leads to cell degeneration.

STOCK UP ON B VITAMINS

Make sure you eat food rich in folic acid and other B vitamins as they help your body to get rid of homocysteine, a toxic amino acid that has

been linked to an increased risks of Alzheimers. A Dutch study found that people who took 800 mcg of folic acid a day had less age-related memory loss over the course of three years than those who didn't. Foods which contain these vitamins include whole-grain cereals, rice, nuts, milk, eggs, meats, liver, fish, fruits, and leafy green vegetables.

"Are you one of those people who forgets someone's name just after you've been introduced?"

DON'T PANIC

Although moderate stress can actually be quite stimulating, when your brain comes under intense pressure, it can dull your memory. When you are under stress, chemicals called glutamates are pumped into the brain. If this stress is severe or prolonged these glutamates can corrode connections in the part of the brain called the hippocampus, which is the memory organising centre.



GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Most of us know by now that we need at least seven or eight hours sleep in order to perform properly, but did you know that chronic sleep disturbances can also severely affect your memory? "This is because a large part of the 'lay down' and consolidation period of learning occurs during sleep," says Rita Carter, author of *Use Your Brain To Beat Memory Loss* (£12.99, Cassell).

STOCK UP ON SUPPLEMENTS

While maximising your nutrition through diet is always the preferable option, for those wanting piece of mind (no pun intended), supplements can help too. Two of the best memory-boosters are acetyl-L-carnitine (found in red meat), and co-enzyme Q10 (found in nuts, fish and leafy greens) which increases energy production in the mitochondria, the 'power plants' of all cells.

THINK ON

As with the rest of your body, one of the most effective ways to keep your mind razor sharp is to keep it active, and that means both intellectually and socially. So get those little grey cells working! Why not attempt a cryptic crossword, watch *Newsnight*, buy a puzzle book or join a debating society – anything to help keep your brain active and ticking over on a regular basis.



findahealthstore.co.uk

If you've ever examined a food label, worried about the chemicals in your face cream or questioned the environmental impact of your washing up liquid - then, chances are, you will find plenty to interest you in a specialist health store.

Health stores are more than places to buy your bran and vitamins, they have a wealth of knowledge on all things natural, ethical and environmental.

Discover the difference between, and considerable benefits of, shopping in independent health stores rather than mass-market outlets. With thousands of different natural products to choose from, health

stores are a one-stop shop for everything natural, ethical and environmental: wholefoods, organics, raw foods, allergy-free foods, vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, sports nutrition, essential fatty acids, cruelty-free bodycare, environmental-friendly household cleaners, recycled paper products - some even stock eco-paints, organic clothing and vegetarian pet foods.

Health stores have staff who are qualified and/or experienced in helping with a wide range of health conditions including Acne, Allergies, Children's Health, Digestion, Energy, Fatigue, Hair, Skin & Nails, Heart Health, Joint Mobility, Mood, Menopause, Men's Health, Mouth

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THE Barefoot Doc

Our top tao guru on how to cope with all the terror in the world

Q “I feel so upset at all the atrocities that I’ve been seeing reported in the news recently. I feel depressed that the world is such a horrible place and can’t understand how humans can treat one another the way they do. Can you help?”

Yes, the degree of twist being exhibited at the moment is unfathomably distressing, with no instant macro-solution apparent. But don’t be dismayed or lose hope, or your sense of humour about the human condition, for on a micro-level, in your own ambit, you generate the atmosphere and conditions you wish for the world, and in the fullness of time, this influences more and more people, hence that now sadly hackneyed yet succinct axiom of Gandhi’s: “be the change you want to see”.

We can’t overcome the darkness by force, all we can do is shine our light. And the brighter we all do, the faster the toxic steam will come out of this wave of violence. See the human family as a swarming collective organism: some people are committing unspeakable acts, and we are not. The instinct lies latent in all of us, so thank heavens we’re not the ones impelled to act on it.

Anthropologically, this is just the logical development of the punk movement. Punk was the first time nihilism was expressed as a fashion –



THE BAREFOOT DOCTOR
is a leading tao master who runs live online guided meditations at BarefootSatsang.com
Check out *Awakening the Laughing Buddha Within* by Joe Hoare and the Barefoot Doctor at joehoare.co.uk

“no future” was its slogan. But congruent with the relatively more innocent 70’s, it was sufficient to express it by merely trashing the conventional aesthetics of fashion and music.

These noisier days however for a sentiment to cut through it has to be expressed far more sensationally. So though extreme, this post-modern version is really just an ephemeral fashion, which too shall pass.

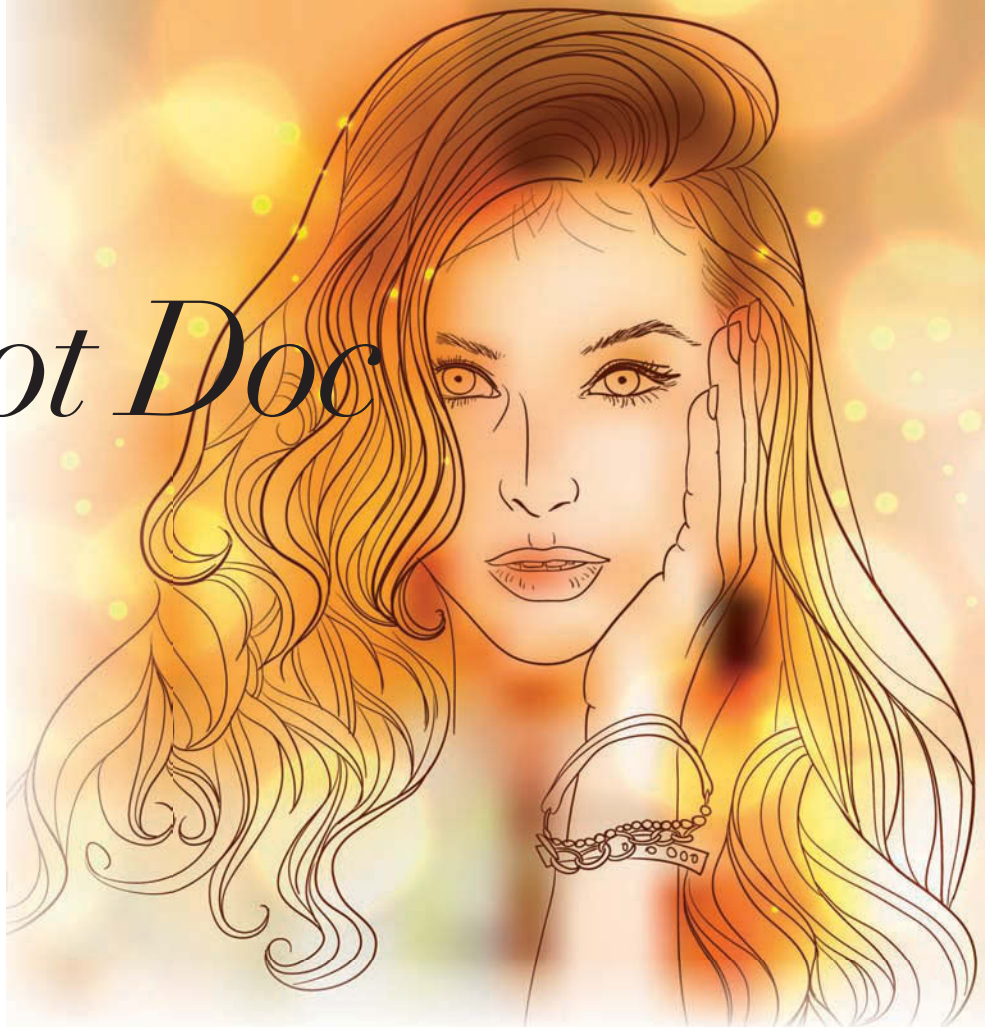
The tragedy in it is that people are being brutalised and are losing their lives and beloveds in horrible ways – and all totally needlessly.

But though the media focuses on the most extreme examples, thus making it appear that’s all that’s going on, this actually still only represents a minuscule proportion of humanity. The vast majority of us all around the globe, no matter how quaint or absurd the ideologies we subscribe to, do actually manage to live together in relative peace and harmony – we are still actually enjoying world peace:

most cars don’t crash into each other, most people’s homes don’t get destroyed, most people settle their differences without resorting to violence, and most people are more inclined to help rather than harm their fellows.

It’s inevitable when as a society we suppress nature, tarmac it over, put slap and lipstick all over it, and make it all safe, seamless and wall-to-wall convenient as we’ve so remarkably managed, that the opposite force of chaotic destruction will rear its head if only for the sake of a bit of balance and dynamics in humankind’s story, without which we wouldn’t have stimulus to grow.

So rather than expend too much energy thinking about atrocities, focus on the beauty, majesty, altruism, ingenuity, courage and magnificence of humanity the vast majority of us valiantly express. For what you focus on grows, or so says that magical ancient taoist sage, Barefoot Doctor.



STOP

Procrastinating!

Quit putting things off and get productive today,
says mind guru **Magdalena Bak-Maier**

Procrastination is a true monster that takes away confidence and ultimately undermines self-worth. It also saps vital energy. Every time you delay something, you add imaginary weight onto your shoulders while the item joins the long queue of to-do things – a burden of a promise you need to fulfil. Over time, this burden grows and grows and your self-worth shrinks in its shadow. You drag along a big suitcase of things you can't seem to get around to but which you nonetheless want to, or think you need to, get done soon.



There are times when procrastinating is useful. For example, when you require more information or are unclear about what to do. In each case, procrastination is, in fact, a real signal for taking specific action such as seeking advice or gathering further information.

Perpetual procrastination on tasks that require immediate attention, such as work, bills, travel arrangements, working out logistics for your holiday or even tackling that CV for a better job, kills productivity. Such actions are important yet can be easy to postpone. Tackling them head on means that you are taking consistent action naturally without having to be pushed by impending deadlines or final notices. As a result, you're being highly productive because you're taking ownership of your decisions and actions.

The goal of it is simply to build the necessary resilience to overcome procrastination and take action. I do this exercise with individual clients to help them discover their power of resolve and self-integrity. Your goal is to tackle only one task and get yourself into the discipline of starting.

Most people can get themselves to do things at the last minute under the pressure of deadlines. This is different. By mastering your own procrastinator you are learning to take action in the moment. This is vital to creating impactful results and getting things done. You do not need a reason other than you deciding to take action. Regular practice here will save you lots of last-minute rushes and will significantly increase your sense of balance and control.



GET PRODUCTIVE!

Try the procrastinator buster exercise and start changing your behaviour today

Procrastinator buster

1 Take a deep breath. Good. Now take another one. And another. Exhale slowly each time. Allow your body to feel the benefit of your breath and the power that is growing inside you. Yes, you! You are about to kick your procrastinator out. You will send it flying spectacularly into the sky, and as you do it you will feel the energy, confidence, lightness and motivation that remain in its place – the source of your productivity to accomplish whatever you need to.

2 Now, write down a list of things you have been putting off. This list should include items that:

- When accomplished, will leave you better off

than you are at the moment, i.e. doing each one will move you ahead in some real way.

- Are things you need to do eventually or which you should have done by now and which only weigh you down.

- Can be done in roughly the same time it takes to contemplate doing them and letting the procrastinator take over.

- You just can't seem to get yourself to do even though you would laugh at someone else if they told you about it.

3 Having assembled your procrastination list, look at each item in turn and note down the exact reason why you're not getting on with the task. Many people do this step on a computer as they often keep a long to-do list of tasks they need to complete but procrastinate on. Your reasons might be similar to these examples:

- This is not very important in the great scheme of things.

- I don't know how to get started.
- I really hate this task.
- It would be nice to get it done but I don't feel like doing it.
- I'm scared, nervous, confused, etc.

4 Having named the real reasons you're procrastinating, go through your list again and cross out all the items that you noted are not important right now. If they become important later, they will resurface on their own as real priorities.

5 Then pick one item from the remaining list where you feel you can make worthwhile progress. It's your turn to bust procrastination.

What am I putting off?.....
Why?.....
My action knowing this
.....



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- Looking at your original list, what do you tend to procrastinate on and why? What stops you from taking action?
- What are you missing or lacking in each case?
- How do you feel after tackling your procrastination? What are you learning about yourself through this exercise?
- What assumptions do you tend to make when you procrastinate about the task, the time it will take or the outcome? Are any of these helpful?

TAKEAWAY LESSONS

Doing this exercise will help you to realise that what you tend to procrastinate on are often actions that are relatively small and may not take very long once you start, but which often appear far larger. This is normal. As you procrastinate, the thoughts about doing the actions grow. The actions balloon in size without the real work increasing at all. The procrastinator buster helps you focus on the real action steps required to get the job done. Sometimes the action involves drawing a line in the sand and eliminating the tasks, delegating the work to others or breaking it down into work you can crack on with right away. As you take purposeful action you become productive again and you beat the procrastinator within you.

Being able to take action is key to success. And I know you will feel amazing every time you switch from vague, indefinite delays and take control of what you create. With time, you will build a muscle without even thinking about the exercise – but you also need to be patient. Eventually, your in-tray will get smaller, your inbox will be empty at the end of the day and you will actually have time to ask those important questions such as ‘what else do I really fancy doing?’ You will sleep better and smile more. Now that’s productivity in its best form.

“By focusing on what you want to create, instead of the problem, your brain will get to productive work”

Think like a child

Children focus on what they want. Adults focus on problems. Kids explore, make mistakes and learn through feedback. Adults generally prefer to copy, fear mistakes and forgo learning. Once you get your head around using your brain as you did when you were a kid, you will be able to overcome any of your individual productivity blockers in a way that meets your requirements and gives you what you want. In fact, you will find that many of the best productivity strategies when deployed in their most effective form are grounded in that way of thinking.

Change your focus

By focusing on what you want to create instead of the problem, your brain will automatically get to productive work. This way you can turn your problem into a desired result. Ensure your desired result is a tangible task that makes sense. The best check for that is to make sure that when you read it back to yourself, it should sound like something that you could delegate to another person and they would easily know what you mean.

This is probably the most powerful differentiator between truly productive people at work and those who fail to get much work done. Achievers are able to define specific actions and then get going on them right there and then, or set a specific time to tackle them later. Less productive people dwell on the problem.

It’s the oldest trick in the book but many still don’t get it. Success is made up of small steps that gradually do add up to those big results. When you define your first step as the big result, though, you will buckle under it and probably derail. So start small and trust that you will get there through steady progress, reviewing and learning as you go.

Adapted from *Get Productive!: Boosting Your Productivity And Getting Things Done* by Magdalena Bak-Maier (published by Capstone, RRP £12.99).

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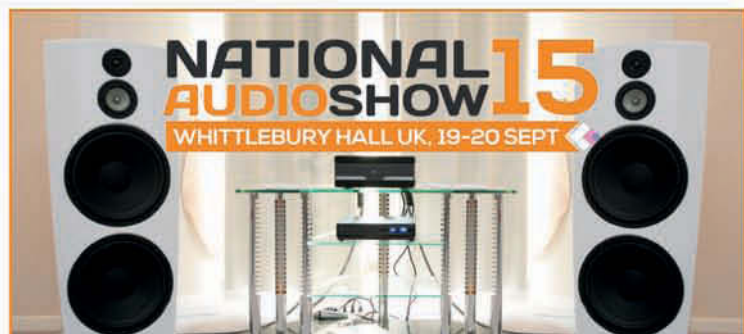
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On the Couch

Top psychologist **Dr Nicola Davies** introduces the hypochondriac personality

Do you find yourself looking up symptoms of rare and exotic diseases you believe you have contracted? Have you exhausted your annual sick leave by the middle of the year? Does your GP look exasperated when you visit (and knows the names and occupation of every member of your family)? Then you could have the hypochondriac personality.



THE HYPOCHONDRIAC PERSONALITY

KEY TRAITS

Here are the most common things to look out for:

- Continual fear of the possibility of having contracted a serious illness and a tendency to interpret minor symptoms as the precursor to a serious health condition.
- Changing doctors regularly in order to get second (or even third and fourth) opinions after being told that nothing serious is the matter with you, even when extensive tests have been conducted.
- Feeling the need to discuss symptoms with friends and family on a regular basis.
- Regular self-examination such as searching for lumps and feeling the need to check pulse and blood pressure even when there are no current medical reasons to do so.

Positives

There are very few actual benefits to hypochondria, but some positive include:

- It means that anxiety is being released rather than avoided – now you just need to work on identifying what the real anxiety is about!
- You are a wealth of information for friends and family seeking home remedies for less serious illnesses.
- You are good at research – after all, you have trawled the internet for hours at a time, seeking insight into various illnesses.
- You have perseverance – you just need to challenge it into something other than your health anxieties.



- It is likely that you practice healthy living, including a nutritious diet and regular physical activity.

Negatives

The consequences of hypochondria could have serious repercussions on quality of life and relationships:

- Hypochondria could cost you your job owing to a high level of absenteeism for sick days and medical appointments.
- This condition negatively affects close personal relationships such as friendships and marriage.
- The hypochondriac no longer trusts the medical profession in general, which can prevent you adhering to medical advice.
- If hypochondria is left untreated it could aggravate any underlying psychological disorders that may have been its cause.
- You live in a perpetual state of fear – of the next symptom, disease, or even death.
- People can start to avoid you because they don't want to hear about your 'new illness'.

HOW DO I DEAL WITH ONE?

It can be trying to have a hypochondriac as a friend or loved one. Here are some tips on how to handle them:

- First and foremost, never make assumptions. A person could really be suffering from symptoms which are of concern. Encourage them to see their doctor regularly so that these can be monitored.
- If repeated reassurances from doctors haven't been of help and health concerns appear to be a long-term source of anxiety, tactfully suggest that depression can lead to actual physical symptoms and encourage the person to pursue this as a possible 'new' way of tackling their symptoms.

AM I ONE?

The following are ways to identify this problem in yourself:

- If medical opinions reassure you that all is well, you probably aren't a hypochondriac.
- If your health concerns appear to be unfounded and are long-term, you should consider the possibility of a non-physical cause.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Thankfully, there are things you can do to help yourself change this way of thinking:

- Get help. Antidepressants and cognitive-behavioural therapy can help to address the causes of hypochondria.
- Cultivate a good relationship with your physician and inform him or her of your concerns and symptoms.
- Look out for situations that seem to trigger feelings of ill health. Identifying them may be the key to your recovery.

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- £150 discount on the standard retreat price of £695 for a friend to share your twin room (see T&Cs below)

You will be staying at a beautiful boutique hotel, 10 minutes from the sea. Here you'll experience a taste of the 'real' Spain, staying

alongside local families, delicious tapas bars and near to an historic castle.

Expect your yoga and Pilates to rapidly progress as you work with teachers dedicated to their chosen field. So what you'll experience is the pure form of these disciplines and not a 'yogalates' blend! Blissful Retreat offers yoga-inspired retreats in Spain from March to November when the weather is at its absolute best. There are retreat programmes that combine yoga with hiking, fitness, Pilates, or detoxing in beautiful locations close to the sea. Meet the friendly team as you relax, restore and rejuvenate in the most breathtaking natural setting. Plus it's been voted a top 10 yoga retreat in the world by FoxNews.com!

For more information visit blissfulretreat.com or call them on 0034 620 147 089

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£1,000!**

HOW TO ENTER...

For more info see blissfulretreat.com

To enter go to
naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk/giveaways

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: bookings must be made direct via BlissfulRetreat.com a minimum of 6 weeks prior to date of travel. This prize is subject to availability and cannot be exchanged for another holiday, goods or money. £150 discount on 2nd place is based on the current retreat price of £695 for a second person sharing your twin ensuite room, excludes airport transfers and free massage / facial.



GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

Let the natural ingredients and essential oils in Badger Sleep Balm help calm your mind as you drift off into a peaceful night's rest.



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Your Body

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND FITNESS

SLEEP TIGHT, STAY BRIGHT

How much do you get? Sleep that is. If you struggle to get a peaceful night's slumber it could impair your memory later in life. A researcher at Baylor University has found that young adults and middle-aged individuals who have a steady sleep pattern also have better memory and brain function in their seventh and ninth decade. "It's the difference between investing up front rather than trying to compensate later," he said. All hail the power naps!



Badger Balm's Hardworking Hands is the perfect night-time ritual before you drop off to sleep. With sweet birch and wintergreen oils it will have transformed your hands come morning. Hardworking Hands, from £4.99 graftonsbeauty.co.uk



For more holistic health ideas visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk

ASANA *of the* MONTH

SEAL POSE

Seal pose is a deep, challenging backbend and a yin pose. Not recommended for those with back problems, build up to seal pose by practising cobra or sphinx. This asana works to regain the spine's natural lumbar curve, and to tone the back.

■ To practise seal, begin in sphinx pose – lying on your front, with your forearms resting on the mat, shoulders away from ears.

■ Take your hands out in front of you and to the sides of your shoulders. Your fingers should point out at a 45 degree angle.

- Drop your shoulders, spread your fingers and have your arms facing straight, but not locked.
- Breathe. Stay for up to two minutes. Come out carefully and take child's pose.



Illustration by Maria Taylor

SUNRISE IBIZA

Energising yoga sessions on a poolside deck in the rolling citrus groves of Ibiza... If this is your idea of heaven join *Natural Health's* very own Jax (yoga expert Jacqueline Lysycia) this June for women-only Express Alkalising Yoga and Juice Cleanse weekends. "Candida or bloating can be the root of so many issues; we've created this express weekend for busy women who are short on time but want immediate results." Tempted? Read on at formenterayoga.com and you will be!

YOGA news

Calm your mind and centre your body with this holistic ancient practice



SOME LIKE IT HOT

Like to work up a sweat? You're in fine company; Lady GaGa's the latest celeb to share a snap from her Bikram yoga class on Instagram (it's the perfect detox after a heavy jamming session apparently). Celebrate your love for yoga at its hottest with this screen-printed tote bag, £18 from heyholla.com

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO...

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO...DHYANA

The 'eight limbs of yoga' are ways of living and thinking, from alignment to behaviour, which help you achieve the most benefits alongside your yoga practice. This month... Dhyana

What is it?

In yoga, meditation is known as dhyana yoga; this is the technical word used in the yoga scriptures. It is a state where you have stillness of the mind.

How do I practice it?

This could be done through two stages. First you need to block out thoughts and sensory distractions, then you can practice dharana (for example using a mantra, concentrating on the breath, an object like a candle, or using an image of a great person or guru to really focus on one thing). After this, the third stage is dhyana. There is a subtle difference between dharana and dhyana. Where dharana means practicing one-pointed attention, dhyana is ultimately a state



GOING FOR GOLD

Love it or hate it, competitive yoga is here to stay with last month's National UK Yoga Asana Championships attracting practitioners from all over the UK. For many, making yogic practice a contest detracts from its core principles but yoga federations across the globe are pushing for inclusion into the Olympic Games. Perhaps one day the glittering rewards of this ancient discipline may become a little more tangible.

Q

ASK THE INSTRUCTOR



I love my hatha classes but find it impossible to switch off my racing mind, which endlessly flicks through problems from my day. I feel I'm missing out on the core point of the class – am I doing the wrong type of yoga?

A Jax says: The mind knows nothing of your body and if the yoga practice you're following doesn't help you to ground the incredible amount of cerebral intelligence into your physical body, try another class. There are many styles and differing approaches but a good teacher will be able to quieten his or her students' minds before entering into the physical practice of yoga. Otherwise you carry all of that mental stress through the class with you and that's no fun for anyone.

I would recommend meditation classes to learn skills and techniques to ground and still your mind as without these fundamental techniques we cannot concentrate on anything. I recommend a good meditation master; try my favourite at theartofmeditation.org

Learn more about Jax's approach at

formenterayoga.com

DID YOU KNOW?

A lawmaker from the state of Montana, USA, has tried to have yoga pants banned as part of a campaign against indecent exposure!

of being very aware without focus. So, the mind has been quieted through practising dharana, and in the stillness of dhyana it produces few or no thoughts at all.

How could it help?

When you are able to achieve dhyana (and it will take practice), you will be able to quiet your mind without focusing on a specific object or mantra. It is a deep meditation and the penultimate stage in the yogic lifestyle.

Gems of WISDOM

"If we are not fully ourselves, truly in the present moment, we miss everything"

THICH NHAT HANH, ZEN MASTER

Got a yoga question?



Tell us on Facebook:
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Do this, avoid PMS

Go with the flow? For many of us that's not so easy when PMS takes hold. Killer cramps, belly bloating and mood swings straight out of a scary movie – no wonder we dread that time of the month but luckily help is at hand

With over 150 different symptoms (none of which are pleasant) it's easy to see why PMS has got a bad rep. With an estimated 70-90 percent of us united in discomfort, it's fair to say that it's the most hated event each month. But before you hide under the covers with a rom com and hot water bottle, we've picked the brains of the UK's leading nutritionist in fertility and women's health, Marilyn Glenville (marilynglenville.com) to find out how we can say goodbye to PMS for good.

WHAT IS IT?

PMS or PMT – whatever your preference, the stereotypical clichés of irrational, hulk-like moodswings, spot breakouts to rival a teenager and bloating remain the same. “The term PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome) is used to describe all symptoms that would occur after the middle of your menstrual cycle and stop almost as soon as your period arrives,” Marilyn says.

WHY DO WE GET IT?

In short, we don't know! Although experts aren't entirely sure what causes it, the most popular explanations are related to cyclic changes in the sex, pituitary hormones or certain brain chemicals as well as possible nutritional deficiencies. Other factors to consider are that research has shown that women who smoke or have a diet high in salt, caffeine, sugar and red meat or don't have enough sleep are susceptible to more aggressive symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Where do we start? The most common symptoms are: mood swings and irritability, anxiety and tension, bloating and water retention, breast tenderness and swelling, acne, tiredness, weight gain, headaches or migraines, crying spells or depression, sugar and food cravings, constipation and dizziness. Sound familiar? Although fewer than one in 10 women have symptoms severe enough to interfere with their day-to-day responsibilities (lucky you!), they do cause significant disruption to their relationships or working life.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Although it's tempting to lock ourselves away with a good supply of comfort food and a stack of Russell Crowe films, there are plenty of solutions to ease PMS symptoms and get on with our day. “Instead of looking at all the different symptoms it is better to change your overall lifestyle to ensure optimum health and wellbeing,” Marilyn says. “Small changes that we do everyday could suddenly be triggers when that time of the month rolls around, so it's important to be aware of what effects these have on our body.”

Nutrition

“What you eat is the foundation of your health and it's a crucial aspect of not only preventing, but also treating PMS,” Marilyn tells us. “The most important dietary change you can make is to keep your blood-sugar levels steady; the higher your sugar intake (and caffeine) the more severe your symptoms are likely to be.

If it's possible, cut out sugar and caffeine completely.” Take it easy, we know how vital that cup of Joe can be in the morning, but introducing green tea to your routine is a good way to substitute the beans before giving it up altogether. “Try to eat every three hours as this prevents your blood-sugar levels dropping and stops the release of stress hormones, which block the hormone progesterone in the second half of your cycle,” Marilyn advises.



NH
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Supplements

Love them or hate them, supplements have their place and can make a huge difference to how you feel. "They're the best way to make sure you have enough of the essential nutrients to balance your hormones," Marilyn says. But with so many on the shelves, how do we know which is the best to take? "Both magnesium and vitamin B6 are very

important when it comes to controlling your mood and behaviour. Vitamin B6 supports production of dopamine and serotonin (a 'happy' hormone) and magnesium is classed as 'nature's tranquilliser' as it helps to reduce anxiety and tension. Zinc is an important mineral as it is a component of more than 200 enzymes. "If that's not enough to stock your medicine cabinet, you can also include lighter supplements to support weaknesses that your body may have developed over time. "Many women that suffer from PMS have been found to have a problem with converting linoleic acid (LA) to GLA, a plant-derived omega 6. There are many factors that can prevent that conversion, like stress, a high-sugar diet or low levels of vitamin B6, magnesium and zinc. To provide our body with an efficient amount of GLA you can supplement these by taking evening primrose oil, borage oil and starflower oil."

Hydration

Struggling to get that top button up? Although you may not link PMS with keeping hydrated, water retention is one of the biggest

complaints for women during their periods. As crazy as it may seem, drinking more water will actually help that bloating feeling almost immediately. "Apart from reducing your intake of salt and salty foods and drinking more water you can also start including dandelion tea to your daily diet to reduce water retention," Marilyn explains. "Dandelion is a natural diuretic, which allows fluid to be released without losing vital nutrients at the same time. It is one of the best sources of potassium and contains more minerals and vitamins than any other herb. In addition, it is known to support detoxifying the process in your body."

Work it out

Ok, it may seem like the very last thing you feel like doing but bear with us. "When you exercise your body produces 'happy' hormones, called endorphins," Marilyn tells us. "They help us to feel happier, calmer and more alert. If you exercise regularly you are more likely to reduce stress levels, anxiety and depression, which are common PMS symptoms." Gym anyone?

ASK THE EXPERTS



Don't suffer in silence, our team of experts is on hand to answer your health questions

Q What is the ayurvedic way to treat hayfever?

A Deepa says: Hayfever, which is also called allergic rhinitis, causes a runny nose, sneezing, itching eyes, scratchy throat, and itching, swelling, or hives on the skin. Often, people appear to have a cold. It is due to allergies to pollen or other substances during specific times of the year. Ayurveda looks at hayfever as a pitta-kapha imbalance along with presence of toxins or ama in the body.

Foods

- Avoid cold and heavy foods like dairy, yoghurt and cheese early in the mornings or later in the evenings.
- Avoid faulty food combinations like fruit and dairy.
- Favour more general spices like turmeric and black pepper in foods.
- Try and consume more hot soups and liquids. This helps to liquefy/melt the congested mucus.
- A tea or decoction made from liquorice, black pepper, basil and ginger can be taken twice daily before the hay fever season starts. This will help to prevent the onset of symptoms.



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A medical doctor and internationally renowned ayurvedic practitioner
ayurvedapura.com



CLAIRE CLERKIN
A nutritional therapist who trained with CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine)
naturopathy-uk.com



AMANDA ALLPORT
An advanced skin care therapist and diet and nutrition specialist
amandaallport.net



RUTH HAJIOFF,
A qualified practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine
wildwoodgroves.com

Herbs

- Pippali, which is also known as long pepper, is one of the best herbs to strengthen the immune system.
- Turmeric when taken regularly will help to prevent the onset of hayfever. This can be taken three times daily in warm water or mixed with honey.
- Tulsi which is also known as Holy Basil is known as one of the best respiratory system rejuvenators. People with more congestion (runny nose) will find this herb helpful.

Massages

- Nasya, the ayurveda nasal treatment, is very good for hayfever. Medicated ayurvedic herbal oils are administered into the nostril after an energising massage and steaming to the face. This once again helps to cleanse and clear out any mucus congestion from the sinuses.
- Ayurvedic foot massages are very helpful for people suffering from redness, burning and watering of eyes.
- Ayurvedic abdominal massages are also good for toxins in the body.

Yoga

- Energising breathing exercises like the cleansing breath exercise is the exercise of choice for hayfever. This not only helps to cleanse and clarify the sinuses but also helps to strengthen the immune system.
- Likewise the breath of fire, also called bhastrika breathing, is good.
- Sun salutation is the sequence for this imbalance.

Q I have mild asthma and get a tight chest from time to time. I hate taking an inhaler as I know it's not natural. What can I do instead?

A Claire says: Susceptibility to asthma is associated with diet, so making some changes to what you eat can help.

Eating unprocessed (ideally organic) food can calm asthma. Eliminating additives like tartrazine is also important.

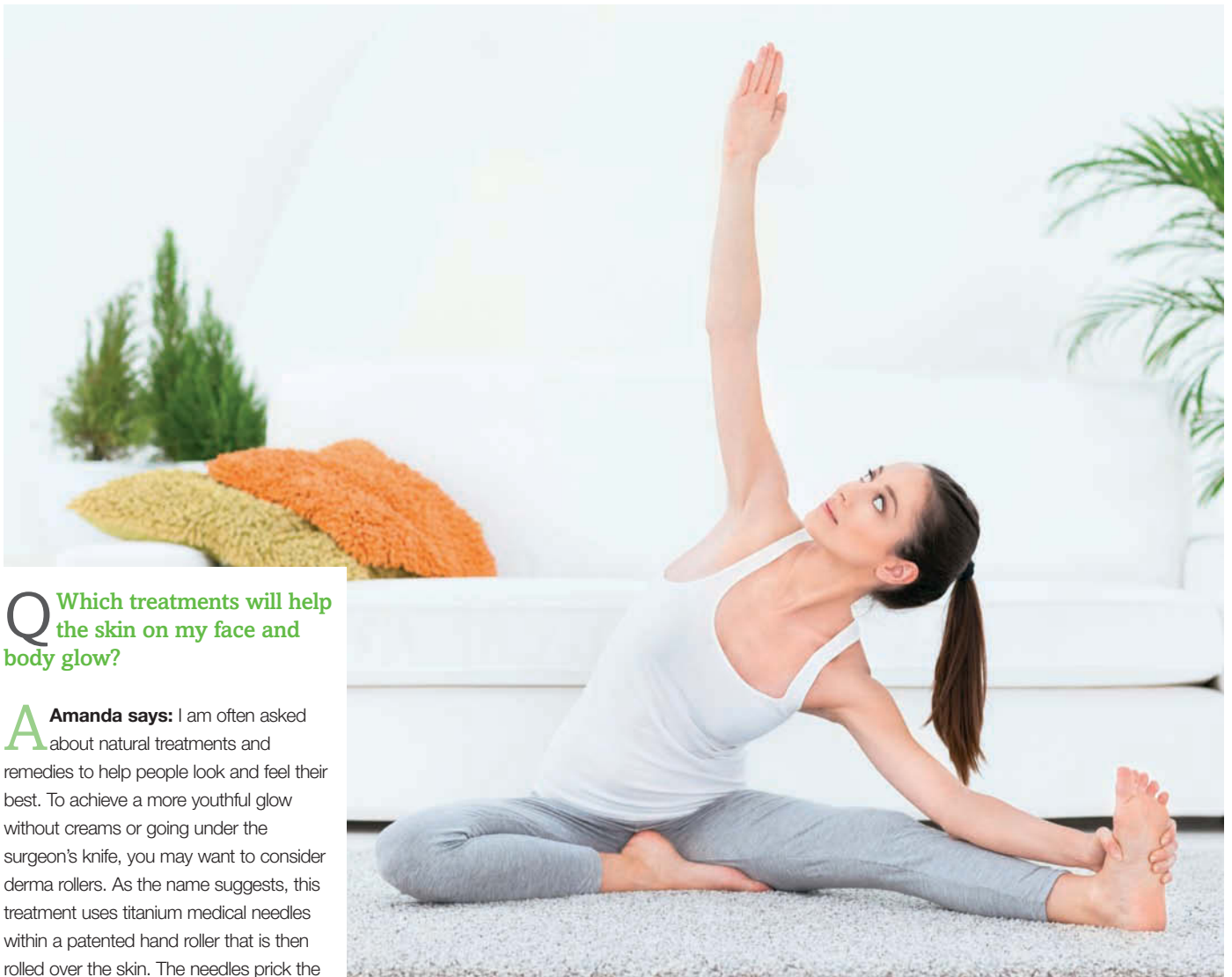
Some foods may trigger symptoms. Eggs, fish, shellfish, dairy, chocolate, wheat and citrus can cause problems. Try eliminating each of them, in turn, for a week. If your symptoms diminish, or flare up on re-introducing the food, remove it from your diet.

In the meantime, eat foods that are known to reduce asthma symptoms, including:

- Antioxidants have been shown to improve asthma. Eat an array of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables daily and swap regular tea and coffee for green tea.
- Magnesium can relax muscles in the lungs. Leafy green vegetables and nuts are good sources.
- Omega 3 supplements can also be beneficial.

It might also be worth you taking a look at getting a natural salt pipe, which some asthma sufferers say helps their breathing.





Q Which treatments will help the skin on my face and body glow?

A **Amanda says:** I am often asked about natural treatments and remedies to help people look and feel their best. To achieve a more youthful glow without creams or going under the surgeon's knife, you may want to consider derma rollers. As the name suggests, this treatment uses titanium medical needles within a patented hand roller that is then rolled over the skin. The needles prick the skin to encourage it to regenerate and repair itself naturally. The tiny holes disappear within a few hours and the results, which include a reduction in wrinkles, lines and even scarring, are visible within a few days. This treatment will also help firm up the skin and is completely natural but a course of treatments is recommended for the best results.

For your body try hot stones – the most relaxing and soothing massage therapy available. Hot stones of various sizes are placed on key points on your body and their heat melts away tension, eases muscle stiffness and increases circulation as well as your metabolism. Sessions last from 1-1 ½ hours. Not only does this treatment leave you soothed and relaxed, it will help your skin to glow too, as will drinking water or herbal teas. A hot stone massage, however, takes a lot of skill and sensitivity on the part of the therapist so make sure you go to someone who is qualified.

Q I've heard argan oil helps many ailments. Can it help my bad skin?

A **Ruth says:** Argan can be an excellent treatment for problem skin as it is particularly light and easily absorbed, so will never clog or irritate. Its structure is close to natural sebum making it suitable for all skin types including combination skin.

Traditional Moroccan health books state that external uses of argan oil are to relieve the symptoms of skin problems including eczema, acne, psoriasis, chicken pox, to reduce scarring and relieve muscle and joint pain.

The naturally present plant sterols in argan oil soothe inflammation while its vitamin E content encourages cell regeneration and saponins

“susceptibility to asthma is associated with diet”

soften the skin and help bring water back to the lipid layer.

One of my clients recently told me: "My two year old suffers from sporadic raw red eczema and nothing has helped. The first time he had it all over his stomach for months and months. Within two days of using argan oil the redness had gone and within three he was completely cured."



Health HISTORIES

How does your (health) past affect your present and future? Women's wellbeing expert **Emma Cannon** explains

Everyday in clinic I see someone whose condition can be traced back to earlier in life. In my practice, it is not only important to understand the current state of a person's health, but to try and ascertain, within reason, when it started and under what conditions. Quite often a patient will use the words "I haven't been right since..." or "I used to be so fit and well, then..."

There is a theory in Chinese Medicine that we go through developmental stages in our lives; in women it is every seven years in men it is every eight. It is said that conditions that are carried into an ensuing stage will become more deeply entrenched. So, for example, I often see people who have had glandular fever in their early 20s develop endometriosis in their late 20s if the glandular fever has remained in the system. Equally, the developmental milestone can act as an opportunity to heal some of these issues and to improve overall health.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

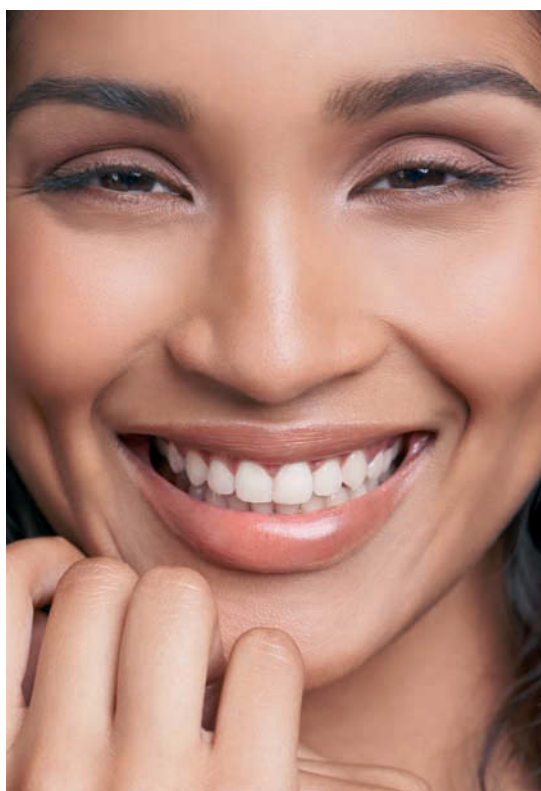
There are several causes of disease or imbalance that stem from teenage years and 20s:

EATING DISORDERS AND OBESITY CAN BE TRACED BACK TO POOR DIGESTION AND BAD OR INAPPROPRIATE DIET. Typically diet goes down hill when teenagers leave home and have to cook for themselves on a small budget. Skipping meals and eating a diet full of sugar is one side of the coin, but equally eating too much of one type of food, even if it's fruit can be detrimental to health.

The digestion plays a vital part in our health – a good digestion will extract nutrients from our food and turn them into energy that will be the driving force behind all our body's processes. Yet many women with apparently 'healthy' diets have compromised digestive systems which impact on the way the body takes in nutrients.

One of the common problems is a diet that has too much raw food, salads and fruit. Or when the largest meal is eaten late in the day. Both of these eating habits put tremendous strain on the digestive system that struggles to break down the raw food at night while we sleep and instead it ferments in our guts. This results in damaging the lining of the gut and a condition that means the content of the bowel seeps into the abdominal cavity and cause inflammation. Over time this can impact on the reproductive system.

Eating disorders and obesity are often started in young adults and although these may begin slowly they can dominate





EMMA CANNON

is the author of *You and Your Bump*, *Total Fertility* and *The Baby Making Bible* (Pan MacMillan)
— visit her online at emmacannon.co.uk



TURN BACK TIME

It is never too late to be healthy. You can still take action!

- Being a healthy weight is vital to health and there are health implications for both the obese and those who are underweight.
- Drink (alcohol) within the limits and as for smoking and drug taking, don't do it!
- Cut down on your intake of sugar, wheat, caffeine and processed food. Your health will thank you for it.
- Seek emotional support if your past is impacting on your present.
- Get yourself checked out for STDs.
- Look after your gut. It is one of the best things you can do to improve your overall health, emotional and physical.
- Finally, prioritise your health. It's your most valuable asset. You may think that it's a given, but it's in your hands. Pass this message on to a younger person in your life!

the individual's life and health for many, many years. Rates of obesity surgery are on the rise, especially for teenage girls, and the UK has the highest rate of child obesity in Western Europe. Obesity has been linked with serious illnesses and an increased risk of developing conditions, such as type-2 diabetes.

TROUBLING TIMES

EXCESSIVE DRINKING, SMOKING AND DRUG TAKING CAN BE TRACED BACK TO EARLIER TRAUMA.

Of course these issues are widespread and in many ways part of being a teenager or young person. But some young adults will experience them more than others and will suffer from the long-term effects. So-called 'natural highs' are also a concern and psychologists report an increase in drug-induced psychosis which can trigger mental health problems for life.

The effects of physical trauma in the body can also lay low for many years and surface later in life. I have seen patients who have had horse riding accidents earlier in life that leave a lasting imbalance in the body. Injury to the testicles is not uncommon and can lead to infertility later in life.

Then there's emotional trauma. Young people are under increasing pressure to be many things; social media encourages the need to be perfect, likeable and successful. Divorce may also leave its mark and many adults describe the devastating effect their parents' divorce had on them. There are many ways that a person's emotional past may impact on present-day health.

SEX EDUCATION

And let's not forget STDs and other infections. Left undetected, chlamydia can wreck havoc in the fallopian tubes and pelvic cavity leading to widespread inflammation and damage to the tubes and other structures. Young adults are surprisingly ignorant about the effects of STDs, and those not using sheath contraception such as condoms will expose themselves to more STDs in their lifetime. This could impact on their health later in life.

Glandular fever (Epstein Barr virus) is often an issue at this age and takes hold when the body is exhausted. This can affect people for many years. Treatment with antibiotics rarely helps and only acts to keep the problem within the system. In Chinese Medicine we say that 'the robber is locked in the house'.

I felt my stomach was going to explode!



Jane started to have embarrassing stomach problems. She tried many treatments and sought advice, but it kept coming back. Then she tried **dida™**.

"It started little by little. At the beginning I thought it was something I had eaten. But I realised that no matter what I was eating I had the same awful problems. It was the eating itself! My stomach reacted at once, getting bloated and I was plagued by wind. I felt as if there was yeast in my stomach!

Sweets and carbs

It was as if sweets and other things like biscuits, cakes, pasta and potatoes made the problem worse. I really felt quite ill and my friends said I looked pregnant!

Lack of energy

I was constantly tired and in low spirits, all energy had been drained away and always this craving for sweets!

I tried **dida™**.

Then I happened to come across an article regarding a new tablet named **dida™**,



So, I purchased a pack to try. After about 3 weeks I felt **dida™** was starting to work. My stomach did not become so bloated after eating and the flatulence decreased. What joy to be able to eat normally without worrying about your stomach and what to wear to conceal the bump".

This is why **dida™** is so good!

Are you affected by discomfort in your stomach? Many of us live with the problem for years without recognising the cause – often this can be caused by something people commonly know as the "yeast syndrome".

An Imbalance in the stomach can affect your whole body. It can take hold and influence your day-to-day well-being. New scientific research shows that cinnamon and other well known spices and herbs have a positive influence on your health and any imbalance in your stomach.



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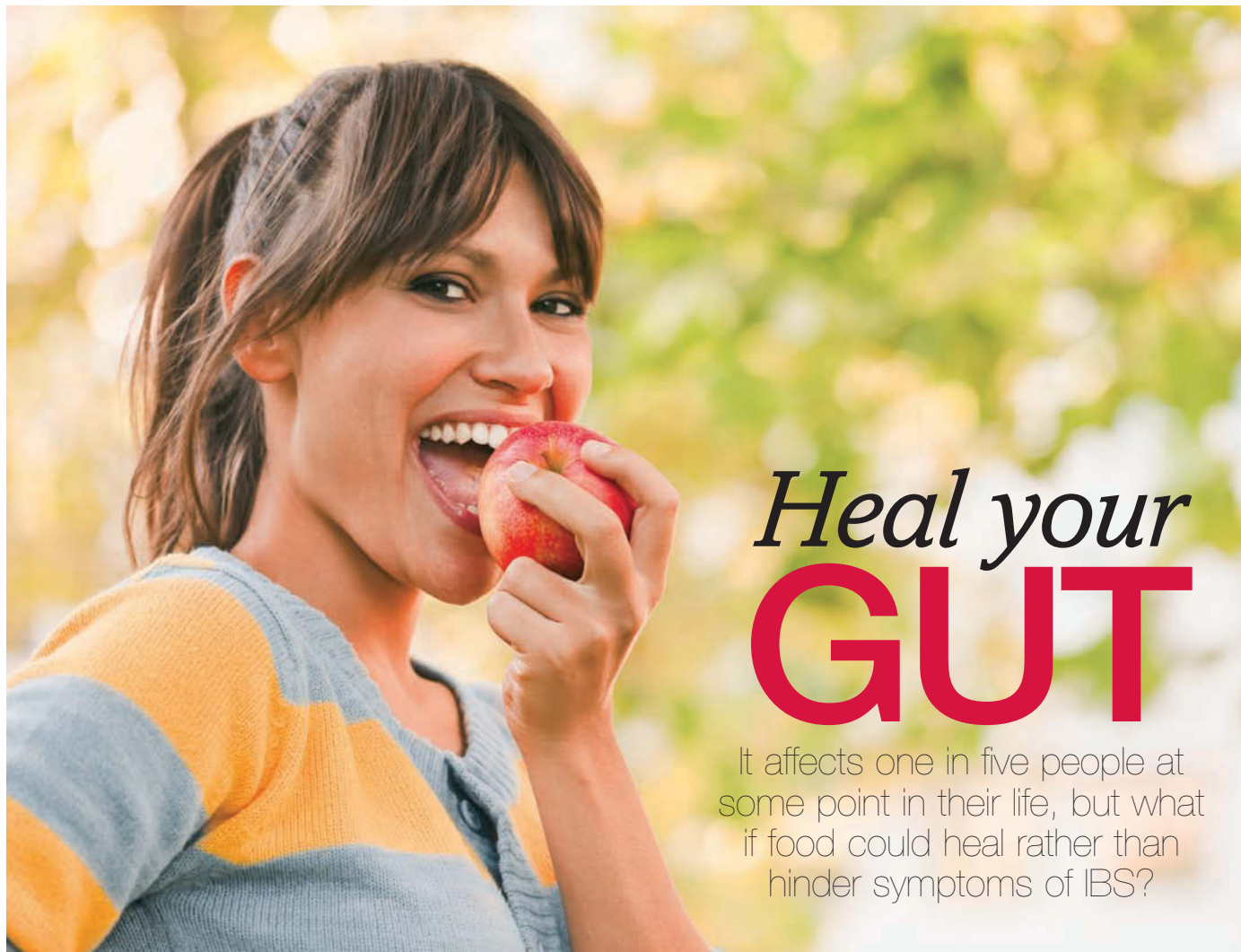


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Heal your GUT

It affects one in five people at some point in their life, but what if food could heal rather than hinder symptoms of IBS?

It can be uncomfortable, embarrassing and even painful. No, we don't mean that dreaded first date, we're talking about the highly inconvenient Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). With between 10 and 20 percent of the UK population suffering from the condition it's one of the most common health concerns in the UK. But did you know that improving your gut bacteria can not only fend off IBS symptoms, it can also transform your emotional health and wellbeing? Known as our "second brain", the stomach shares many of the same biological tissues as the brain including serotonin; the neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of wellbeing and happiness, and it's found in its greatest concentration within the gut; not the brain itself. Therefore keeping our tummy turmoil at bay is a must for overall health. Keris Marsden and Matt Whitmore, authors of *The Paleo Primer* explain how good nutrition can make IBS a thing of the past.

The Paleo Solution

IBS is characterised by a collection of symptoms including cramping, abdominal pain,

bloating, gas, diarrhoea and constipation. IBS affects people of all ages, however it tends to manifest more in young adults, particularly women who are twice as likely as men to be diagnosed. One UK study estimated that IBS presents in almost one quarter of the general population. Elimination diets are emerging as one of the most effective treatments for IBS and many nutritional therapists and GPs are making recommendations to trial a gluten or dairy free diet for six to eight weeks and monitor improvements. The paleo diet is now widely used as a platform on which to base the healing process as several characteristics of paleolithic nutrition have been proven to support optimal digestion.

The Process Of Elimination

The original paleo diet eliminates grains, legumes, dairy and refined sugars as they contain lectins and phytates which are plant components that are indigestible and damaging to the digestive tract. They also bind to many vitamins and minerals in our food rendering them unavailable. Many proponents of the

paleo diet advocate total elimination of these foods for at least 30 days to assess the results it may offer.

A key aspect of paleo nutrition is cooking and sourcing most of your food yourself. Many processed foods contain added non-paleo ingredients such as guar gum so the diet encourages you to become an expert label reader and, more importantly, prepare the majority of your meals yourself so you know exactly what they contain. Many ingredients added to modern day foods to preserve, thicken or sweeten them have been linked to an increase in IBS.

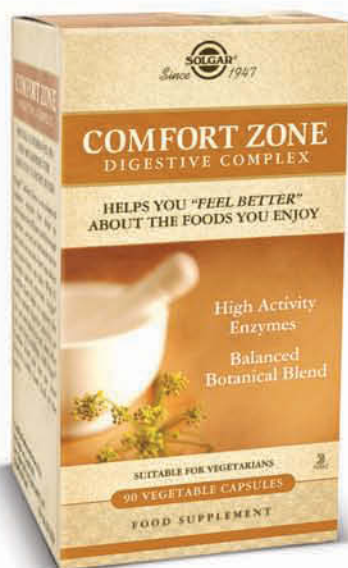
Mother Nature's Nutrition

However, there is also a huge emphasis on the inclusion of foods which help protect us against infection and disease that our ancestors ate abundantly to keep themselves healthy. Many of the foods recommended on the paleo diet have been proven to have a powerful anti-microbial effect on the body protecting us from bugs including herbs, spices, garlic, onions, coconut oil and raw honey. All of these foods help to fight

AT LAST, DIGESTIVE PEACE!

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IBS affects people of all ages, however, it tends to manifest more in young adults, particularly women

and strengthen our immune system against potential invaders. The significant increase in vegetable consumption is vital to increase fibre and inject the essential vitamins and minerals into the body. Swapping cauliflower rice, courgette noodles, salads and baked sweet potato in place of pasta or bread increases the amount of prebiotic foods in your meals, and provide friendly bacteria including lactobacillus and bifidobacteria.

Don't Sugar Coat It

A key aspect of paleo nutrition and healthy digestion is the reduction or elimination of refined sugar consumption. Removing modern day, processed foods such as cereal, cakes and biscuits will naturally decrease the total amount of sugar you consume in a day. There is a strong

association between excess sugar and IBS as it suppresses our immune system allowing opportunistic pathogens to take hold. And if that wasn't enough, yeast cells and bacteria in particular thrive on the fermentation of sugar by these infectious agents which is often behind the bloating and pain many people experience after eating.

See The Light

Although it's termed the paleo diet, it's really presented as a way of life as many healthy daily habits are also essential to fulfill overall wellbeing. Regular exercise, adequate sleep, limiting stress and safe sun exposure are encouraged to support digestive health. Important links between our gut and brain have been recently established with the discovery of the

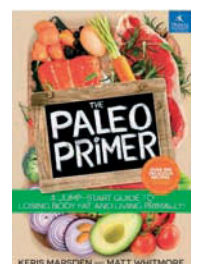
physiological connections between our mindset and our digestive health, supported by a complex infrastructure of nerves and hormones. Daily sunlight exposure is emphasised to improve our levels of vitamin D which is essential for healthy bones and teeth, however, it's also essential for optimal digestion as it plays a vital role decreasing inflammation and supporting the integrity of the gastrointestinal tract to ensure that it functions as a strong barrier between the body and the outside world.

Stay Mindful

Digestion begins from the moment we smell our food, as it kick starts the production of saliva which contains digestive enzymes and the secretion of stomach acid which helps to break down protein. If we rely on sourcing our meals from eateries and takeaway we may skip this vital step and not offer our bodies any prior warning that food is on it's way. Furthermore, these days many people rush mealtimes barely taking a moment to chew or taste their food. We prefer to grab convenience foods like a sandwich and either eat them on the go or whilst still tapping away on our phone or laptop. This may worsen symptoms of IBS as food is not digested sufficiently, it passes into the digestive system causing pain or bloating and damaging the lining of the gastrointestinal tract.

Stock Up On Superfoods

The paleo diet has led to a revival of some food traditions long forgotten with our hectic, time-poor lifestyles, namely eating animal products from nose to tail, including the organ meats and bones. Using bones for broths and soups as well as snacking on liver pate increases consumption of essential nutrients that support the healthy functioning of the digestive system including vitamin A, B vitamins, iron, magnesium and calcium. These paleo superfoods also offer types of proteins notably lacking in our modern diets especially glycine which soothes and nourish the lining of the intestinal tract. There's also a keen emphasis on eating 'live' probiotic rich foods in the form of fermented sauerkraut or kimchii – a food preparation method used in traditional cultures to help support our levels of friendly gut bacteria.



Extracted from
The Paleo Primer,
£10.97 amazon.co.uk



CAROLE CAPLIN

— DO YOU NEED — THERAPY?

Our holistic lifestyle guru champions the new-wave physiotherapy which takes a multi-pronged approach to pain

There's a common misconception that physiotherapists don't treat spines, and that they are the poor relation to osteopaths and chiropractors in regards to successfully treating skeletal issues. I must admit to being guilty of having thought similarly to the latter.

Having 95 percent rehabbed my right shoulder after a nasty fall a year ago, I still had some residual restrictions, so I decided to try Clare Spencer, a physiotherapist who works with top athletes. Clare is a sports and spinal specialist and has a reputation for getting excellent results. Having experience in all areas of physiotherapy, including trauma and orthopedics, neurology, neuromusculoskeletal outpatients, spinal clinics, intensive care and professional sport, backs and necks now make up 80 percent of her work.

Clare is part of a new wave of physios in that she incorporates corrective exercise therapy, manual therapy (mobilisation and manipulation), physio-specific Pilates, dry needling and traditional acupuncture along with postural correction and ergonomic advice. Clare chose physio because it is evidence-based and involves clinical reasoning (the thinking behind the practice). It is an interesting way to link the biology of how the

human body functions to how we move, and how the mind can influence all of this.

Making a full assessment is key to Clare's method and it involves taking into account a person's full past medical history, the onset of their symptoms, the patient's social history (occupation/hobbies/day-to-day life), medication and relevant investigations (X-rays or scans). Clare is also keen to find out the person's thoughts and beliefs about the pain presentation.

Next follows a full mechanical assessment to find the root cause of the symptoms. Clare examines joint range of motion, muscle strength and length, neural tension, balance, proprioception (awareness of where the body is in space) and any relevant special tests. Finally and most importantly is the palpation of the tissues and joints.

It is much better to be proactive than reactive – keeping fit, flexible and strong to avoid the manifestation of dysfunctions. Clare made a really good point: we see it as the norm to have regular dental checks every six months to a year, but this is never suggested or considered to be the norm for the functional workings of our bodies. Your dentist is trying to pick up problems before they

arise and it would be proactive to do this for our bodies. The added stress and pressure we put ourselves through, be it sitting at a desk for eight hours solid, experiencing stress from day-to-day life or signing up for an Ironman triathlon... over time if there is a mechanical imbalance this is likely to create dysfunctions which eventually manifest as pain.

After examining my shoulder Clare informed me that I had a weak tendon which was causing an imbalance in the movement of the ball and socket (glenohumeral joint). This was affecting the normal smooth mechanics in my shoulder and causing pain on certain movements. In response to the pain in my shoulder the muscles in my neck were working over time "to try and help out" and support the area. This muscle spasm itself can hurt as it causes the release of lactic acid which contributes to the painful experience.

Clare explained that symptoms can be worse when we are under stress as tension can creep into our muscles. The spinal musculature is most vulnerable to this, especially the neck muscles as this is where most of us hold tension. If these are tight it can then alter the mechanics in our shoulders leading to dysfunction and pain. This is largely due to the fascia which is a connective tissue that runs like a helix through the body connecting all our structures.

Clare did a combination of release work including manual therapy, myofascial release/massage, acupuncture and dry needling, alongside giving me some bespoke corrective exercises to help restore normal movement. This involved stretching out and releasing the tight tissues in my shoulder and neck and working on specific strengthening work for the weak rotator cuff shoulder muscle which had been torn.

EASTERN WISDOM

Using an integrated approach...

TCM AND ACUPUNCTURE

This is treatment based on the Chinese model of meridians and the flow of energy (chi). Meridians are channels of energy that run through the body. There are 12 in total and each is linked to an organ. In TCM it is believed that if there is a blockage in one of these meridians, this is when you experience your symptom (for example, pain).

The treatment involves inserting fine acupuncture needles into specific points along these meridians. This restores energy flow within the body and reduces tension, stress and pain.



The more recent scientific explanation is that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord and brain. These chemicals (endorphins, for example) will either change the experience, or they will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones, which influence the body's own internal regulating system.

DRY NEEDLING (trigger point needling)
It's possible to palpate (feel) and find knots in tight, tough tissues; these knots are known as trigger points. When needles are effectively inserted into these points in the muscle they release, and thus enable the restoration of normal mechanics in joints and a reduction in pain. It is an excellent way of releasing tight structures as the needles are more specific and go deeper

than traditional massage and myofascial release does.

Dry needling brings to the table instant results as this technique restores the glide of the tissues and makes subsequent physio techniques more effective as the tissues are more pliable. This mechanical effect and release of tissues with an acupuncture needle has been proved on ultrasound scanning.

The combination of traditional Chinese medicine points and dry needling together help target the emotional and physical side to pain to help restore balance and wellbeing in the body and also reduce tension in the tissues. The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture also stimulates the body's natural healing abilities.

Relaxation was also key in the treatment which is where the acupuncture comes in; it aids relaxation and has a mechanical effect on the tissues to release any tight spots by what we call trigger point needling or dry needling.

So whether you use a physio, osteopath or other professional, finding the right level of expertise and seeing the process through will teach to think very differently about your body, how you move it, deal with pain, hold your posture and much more. You may have to try a combination of practitioners in order to find a really skilled one but it will be more than worth it when you land.

PAIN-BUSTING TIPS

Always be wary of anything that promises quick fixes where pain, injury and dysfunction are concerned. Commitment is essential in order to obtain the required long-term changes in tissues. The risk of not fixing the underlying dysfunction means recurrence of problems are likely as the tissues over time will tighten again, becoming dysfunctional and causing pain.

Be realistic: You need three months of regular stretching to properly stretch out a tight tissue. It takes at least six weeks to improve muscle strength. If there is pain there is likely to be weakness due to pain inhibition – this is where muscles reduce their activity as they cannot function well when hurting, therefore the muscles become weak which promotes more pain.

Breathing: It is crucial to adopt the correct breathing technique in order to calm the nervous system down. Not everyone has the thoracic expansion capability to allow for good quality breathing. So make sure that this is checked in your assessment.

Pain killers: In the initial stages to help get people's symptoms under control pain relief is extremely beneficial. Take as advised by the pharmacist or your doctor. It's essential to take the edge of pain, as it stops the body from having to compensate and therefore helps restore its normal biomechanics. This then gives a window to start a graded exercise programme and physio treatment. As the pain settles, the medication then can be reduced and then stopped.

Inflammation: Do not underestimate how inflammatory substances in food and beverages can greatly exacerbate and spark off inflammation at the site of your issue.

Carole is a pioneer of a holistic approach to health, exercise and wellbeing at the Bowskill Clinic. Visit bowskillclinic.com. If you have a question for Carole, email carole@coolhealth.co.uk



Feel Healthier: Eat Breakfast!

Start your day a healthier way with a sprinkle of Elix Heartcare

Meet Kaija. She visited her doctor for a check up in November 2012

where she had a cholesterol check and took a blood pressure test. Kaija led a healthy lifestyle, so it was a surprise to discover that her total cholesterol level was 6.9 – well over the recommended level of 5.0 – and that her “good” HDL cholesterol level was a bit low.

Kaija's doctor suggested a number of different treatments, including statins. “Several of my friends were on statins and I wanted to avoid strong medication which could cause side effects, if possible,” Kaija says. “My doctor suggested I try a cholesterol-lowering margarine, but as I don't eat much bread I wanted to look at other ideas.



“My doctor then recommended a supplement which I could add to my breakfast cereal, yoghurt or smoothie called Elix Heartcare. It contains plant sterols, crushed flax seed, potassium and other nutrients and you simply sprinkle it over your breakfast cereal.”

Over the next few months, Kaija revisited her doctor for follow up cholesterol tests which finally resulted in her total dropping to 5.3 and her “good” HDL levels had increased. “I've noticed that my digestion has improved and I've lost a few kilos, too,” says Kaija.

Expert advice

Sunil Kochhar, Consultant Pharmacist at DearPHARMACIST.info, says: According to the World Health Organisation, smoking, raised blood pressure and cholesterol are amongst the leading causes of death in the developed world, so a supplement which can help control two of these factors is well worth considering. It's important to combine this with a regular exercise and a healthy diet and remember that it will take several months before the full benefits can be seen.

Where to buy

Elix Heartcare is a patented combination of flax seed, plant sterols, potassium and other nutrients which are clinically proven to lower cholesterol and maintain normal blood pressure. It is made in Finland and is available throughout Europe.

To find out more or to order online go to www.healthy2u.co.uk or call 01782 564512.



According to the World Health Organisation, smoking, raised blood pressure and cholesterol are amongst the leading causes of death in the developed world, so a supplement which can help control two of these factors is well worth considering

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Abel and Cole began over 26 years ago, when Keith Abel lugged a big bag of organic spuds around south London. Nowadays it delivers over 60,000 weekly boxes to healthy homes across the country, full of fantastic seasonal organic fruit and veg, along with bread, milk, meat and much more.

It works directly with the best farmers, butchers, bakers and carrotstick makers in the land. It means Abel and Cole know exactly how all the food is made, how it's grown and what does (or more importantly doesn't) go into it.

This month it's new nutrient-rich seasonal juicing box is especially exciting. Each week you'll receive the ingredients for three recipes which celebrate all that the seasons have to offer. There could also be something a little



different thrown in to kick your fresh juice or smoothie up a notch.

Each box makes about seven glasses of juice/smoothie a week and recipes, tips and nutritional info (from nutrition expert Vicki Edgson) are all included, so you know how your juice is working.

Instead of their juicing box you could use the code for any of it's other fruit and vegetable boxes. These are available in a variety of sizes. See abelandcole.co.uk

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- 2-3 apples
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- 2 carrots

The baby kale will boost your levels of vitamin C and A and is a great source of energising iron. Makes 1 glass.

Love Lula

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AEOS Gentle Exfoliant
Pink, £35.98 aeos.net

For more natural beauty ideas visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk

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Stockists may vary. Perfectil® Plus Hair is only available in Boots. 1. Includes biotin which contributes to the maintenance of normal skin. 2. Includes zinc which contributes to the maintenance of normal hair. 3. Includes selenium which contributes to the maintenance of normal nails. *Nilsen GB ScanTrack value sales 52 w/e 21 June 2014. **IRI value data. 52 w/e 6th September 14.

THIS SEASONS MUST-HAVES

blooming Beautiful

From Woodstock waves to the return of the red lip, this season's beauty is a burst of clean, fresh and colourful trends begging you to spring clean your make-up bag and try something new



purple reign

NATorigin Pencil Eyeliner in Lilac, £7.25

lovelula.com

Jane Iredale Pure Pressed Triple

Eyeshadow, £26.50 beingcontent.com

"Reminiscent of 1970's glamour, purple's such a flattering colour. Just be sure to team it with lots of black mascara,"

says celebrity make-up artist
Louise Dartford (louisedartford.com)



morning dew

Ilia Polka Dots and Moonbeams Illuminator, £30 naturisimo.com

Jane Iredale Active Light Under Eye Concealer, £24 beingcontent.com

Antipodes Reincarnation Pure Facial Exfoliator, £18.76 naturisimo.com

Dr Hauschka Translucent Make-Up, £20 lovelula.com

"Illuminated skin is so flattering at any age and is here to stay,"

says make-up artist Jenna Treat
(jennatreat.com)

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Prep the skin by exfoliating and applying a face oil followed by your day cream.

Step 2: With your highlighter dot the cheek apples, top of the nasal bridge, and the peaks of the brow bones and blend.



lining up

Dr. Hauschka Liquid Eyeliner, £17.95

lovelula.com

Lavera Natural Soft Eyeliner, £9.50 lovelula.com

"Eyeliner trends now run the gamut from the ultimate feline flick à la Audrey in Breakfast at Tiffany's,"
says Jenna.

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Put a dot of liner outside and above the eye corner where you'd like the flick to finish.

Step 2: Work inwards and downwards to meet liner with lash line and bring the line across to the inside of the eye.

Step 3: Feather the strokes to avoid wobbly lines and remember, practice makes perfect.

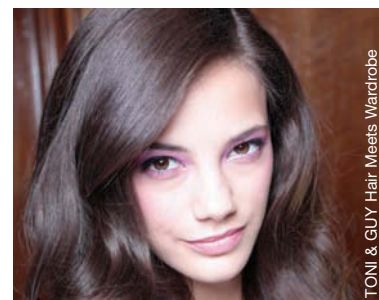


GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Use a natural base colour all over your lid and up to your brows.

Step 2: Apply the purple eyeshadow on the lid into the socket line and along your bottom lashes.

Step 3: For a more subtle look, try using it as an eyeliner along the top lashes.



TONI & GUY Hair Meets Wardrobe

red alert

Bellapierre Lip Liner Pencil in Truly Red, £16 bellapierre.co.uk

The Organic Pharmacy Glam Ultra Glossy Lip Plump, £18.95 naturisimo.com

Ilia Crimson and Clover Lip Conditioner, £22 beingcontent.com

"Red lips are a classic that aren't going anywhere this spring/summer. Apply your chosen colour with your finger to keep your look up to date,"

Louise tells us.

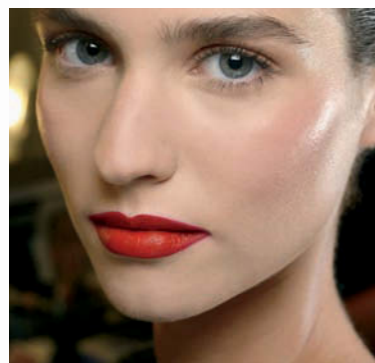
GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Prep lips with a good balm.

Step 2: Apply a sheer layer of your foundation or concealer over lips as a base.

Step 3: Apply your chosen colour with your finger to keep your look up to date.

Step 4: Blot with a tissue and then gently reapply until you have achieved your chosen intensity.



tribal brushstrokes

"Spring trends are strong, opaque colours with an explosion of pastels and alternative ways to decorate your nails,"

specialist nail expert Trish Lomax (trishlomax.com) tells us.

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Buff nails in the direction of nail growth – buffing across the nail will thin the nail plate.

Step 2: Use a long bristle nail art brush to stroke on the colour from the side to the centre of the nail, from the cuticle area all the way down to the tip.

Step 3: Finish with a slick of top coat to add gloss.



Sally Hensen



the braidy bunch

Intelligent Nutrients Hairspray, £25.50 naturisimo.com
Lavett and Chin Sea Salt Texturising Mist, £20
net-a-porter.com

TIGI US Session & Creative Director Thomas Osborn tells us how to get this ethereal look at home:

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Prep the hair with a salt spray.

Step 2: Create a clean, centre parting from hairline to nape, securing the hair in two low temporary ponytails.

Step 3: Spray hairspray to smooth hair and plait two sections of hair just behind the ear and cross over the crown to make an "X" on top of the head.

Step 4: Plait the ends of the braids into each pony.

Step 5: Secure each side with an elastic band, leaving a significant amount of unbraided hair below.

Step 6: Secure the two braids together, taking care to hide the pins and create the illusion of intertwined braids.

Step 7: Use fingers to pull on pieces of the braid to create an undone texture and set the look with hairspray.



Catwalk by TIGI



Catwalk by TIGI



Catwalk by TIGI



TONI & GUY Session Team

get knotted

Brilliant Spray-On Shine, £18 aveda.co.uk

Hereshon Pin Me Down Hairclips, £6

johnlewis.com

Intelligent Nutrients Hair Shine Spray, £18.70

naturisimo.com

"This is the bun of that chic woman who just happened to easily twist her hair up and off of her face,"

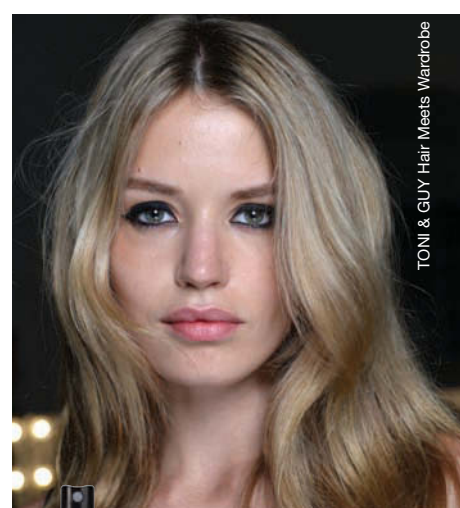
Aveda guest artist Frank Rizzieri said.

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Blow dry hair straight and add a light mist of Brilliant Spray-On Shine for sheen.

Step 2: Create a solid centre parting before pulling hair tightly back into a ponytail.

Step 3: Take two sections from the ponytail and begin to knot the sections tightly into the base letting random pieces poke out. Secure the knotted bun with pins until it is tight to the head.



TONI & GUY Hair Meets Wardrobe



Bohemian rhapsody

Intelligent Nutrients Paddle Brush, £20.80 naturisimo.com

John Masters Organics Sea Mist Sea Salt Spray with Lavender, £16

onlynaturals.co.uk

Rahua Finishing Treatment, £38

net-a-porter.com

"The boho wave is so versatile and simple to achieve at home,"

says hairstylist Ben Cooke (lockonego.com)

GET THE LOOK

Step 1: Using volumising spray, dry hair completely turning head upside down.

Step 2: Starting at the front, use a large barrel curling tong and place in at the roots. Rotate 180 degrees away from the head. Then rotate the styler 360 degrees the opposite way. Repeat this technique, alternating the direction of the styler to the ends

Step 3: Let the hair cool before finger combing the hair to give soft dishevelled finish.



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3 OF THE BEST UNDER-EYE CREAMS



1 Inlight under-eye revive, £55
This high-potency cream targets the delicate under-eye area to brighten the look of dark shadows and minimise puffiness.



2 Nature's best eye serum, £8.54
This contains flaxseed extract as well as precious damask rose water to re-hydrate your skin. Dab the non-greasy serum under your eyes.



3 Kimberly Sayer cellular extract eye lift gel, £29.50
Cleverly, this contains plant pseudocollagen, a living plant-derived yeast that in nature actually holds plants in their upright position and helps give skin a firmer, younger appearance.



BRIGHTER DAYS

Daily defender

Green People's new DD (daily defence) tinted cream, £34.95, gives you SPF15 coverage and a natural glow with no colour matching required. Try it as a base and primer for your make-up.



BEAUTY INSIDER

Victoria Beraou, founder of Victoria and K, shares her beauty tips



- It's very easy to dedicate you life to your children/work/friends or family, but take 30 minutes a week, switch the phone off, lock the door and get some alone time.
- We are all beautiful in our own way – a smile is all you need sometimes to lighten up the face and make someone want approach you.
- My beauty icon right now would be Cindy Crawford for publishing those untouched photos.

Lust have...

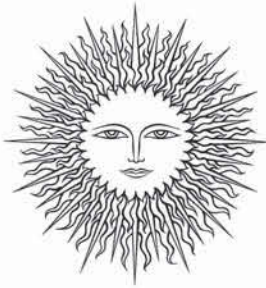
Espa Optimal Skin ProSerum, £48, contains omega 3, 6 and 9, vitamins A and E, turmeric, white lupin and sunflower to enhance elasticity, firm and protect your precious skin against premature ageing

FRESH look

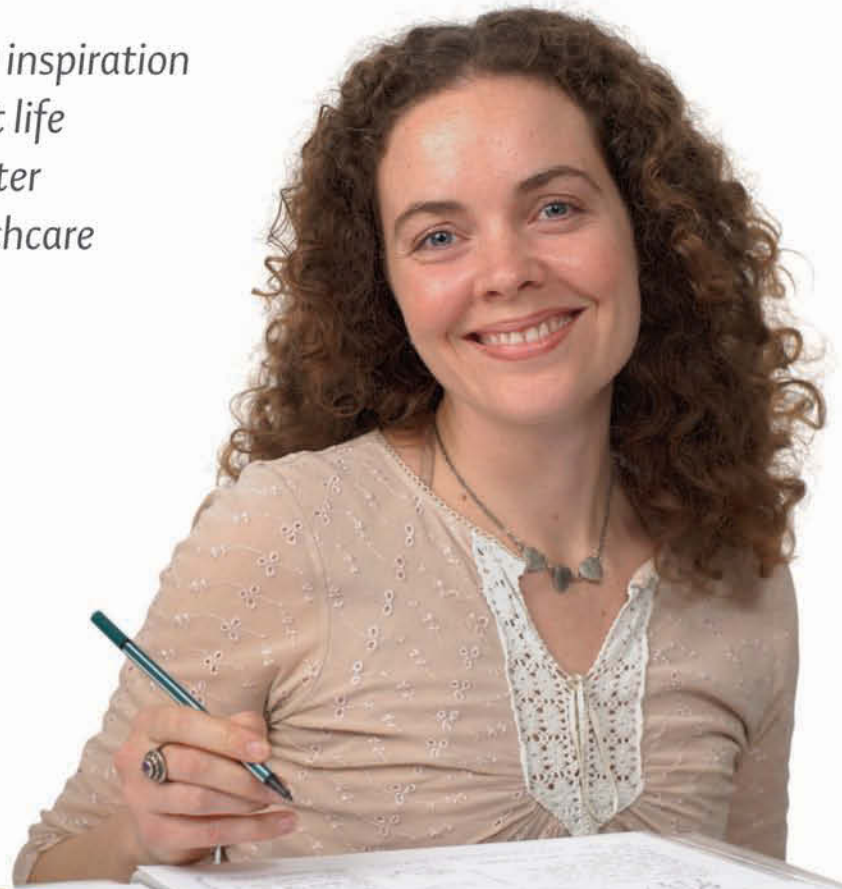
The latest chemical-free beauty buys and skincare advice from our experts

PRO'S TIP: If you tweeze your brows choose sharp, slanted tweezers, which make it easier to pluck out individual hairs. Only remove those directly above the outer edge of your iris and outwards





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Work in healthcare



Graduate: Theresa Johnson

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— THE — *beauty* DETECTIVE

*Our beauty editor at large
Emma Van Hinsbergh goes
on the hunt for killer lashes*

I'd kill to have fabulous eyelashes. I lust endlessly after long, glossy lashes that sweep delicately across your cheeks like one of those Disney cartoon princesses. I even get a bit jealous of giraffes. Have you seen how they flutter those gorgeous sooty numbers as they chew vacuously on acacia leaves? Such a waste! They'd look so much better on me.

Chance would be a fine thing; my measly blonde stumps only look halfway decent with about 10 layers of mascara and a daily grapple with my trusty Shu Uemura eyelash curler. Even more galling, eyelashes start to thin out as we get older, so mine need all the help they can get these days.

Dr Michelle Etherson of mylash.org explains that as we age, growth slows down for most body processes including hair. "Levels of hormones that promote healing and growth also reduce with time and this slowly dampens the extent to which all hair grows."

So far, so annoying. However by focusing on health and nutrition we can give our eyelashes the fighting chance they need to keep fluttering with pride. What's more there's been something of a revolution in eyelash enhancement over the last few years and there are loads of crafty ways you can make them bigger and better.

Like many things, focusing on good diet and nutrition will provide the building blocks for optimal health. Vitamins B3, C, E and the mineral calcium can all help to stimulate eyelash growth. Regular eyelash tinting works a treat and lash extensions are great but Dr Etherson warns that excessive use can bring on traction alopecia so I'd really only use them for special occasions.

When it comes to topical growth optimisers, there are heaps of over-the-counter treatments that provide nutrients directly to the eye area but it is MyLash that has really got the beauty industry talking, mainly because it's so damned effective. Containing an active ingredient called bimatoprost originally developed to treat glaucoma, it stimulates the hair follicle for eyelashes that are noticeably longer, thicker and darker.

However, it's not entirely natural so if you want to go down the holistic route try massaging the eye area with some organic olive oil laced with a few drops of lavender oil every night before you go to bed. This simultaneously stimulates new growth and conditions existing lashes.

Another thing to watch out for is removing your eye-make up at night as too much vigorous rubbing can accelerate the natural shedding process. Follow this advice and you'll soon be giving those upstart princesses a run for their money!

SECRET WEAPONS

Get killer looks with these hard-hitting lash treatments



Revitalash Advanced, £69, contains peptides and natural botanicals to improve flexibility, moisture and shine



Trilogy Organic Rosehip Oil, £16.50, is a great overnight treatment – simply massage a few drops on to your lashes before sleep



Benecos Natural Mascara Vegan, £7.95, is organic and vegan and gives volume and length without clumping



ZO Skin Health Ossential Lash Enhancing Serum, £50, is rich in nourishing proteins to boost lash growth

Is your weight affecting your health?

No matter how hard you have tried in the past, The Metabolic Weight Loss Programme could just be the answer to resolving your weight problem once and for all.

It can be extremely soul destroying that no matter what you do, you just can't seem to shift your excess weight. If you have reached the stage where putting on any more weight is simply not an option, do read on.

Improving your health

Being overweight is no laughing matter when the physical strain on your body is starting to take its toll on your health. Your GP or your family may have expressed their concern and urged you to slim down – all very well if only you knew how to!

Help is at hand to resolve your weight problem. Rachel and her team have helped nearly 4000 clients of all ages and all walks of life to slim down successfully. Many come to see her as a last resort, delighted to have achieved and successfully maintained the weight they want to be.

A workable programme that's easy to follow

The Metabolic Weight Loss Programme is based on a simple four-stage eating plan: the first two stages deal with weight loss, while the last two stages deal with weight maintenance. This highly successful tried and tested programme is easy to stick to and more importantly, it works.

The expected average weight loss of clients is 7-14 lbs. a month. As you can imagine, clients are more than happy with this motivating weight loss, especially for those who have struggled with their weight for so long.



Feeling and looking better - improving your self-esteem

As the weight falls off, time after time clients remark how much better and younger they feel, along side having more energy. Typical health improvements include improved blood pressure and cholesterol, mental alertness, skin conditions and even fertility. Clients often comment on just how impressed their doctors or consultants are with their weight loss and health improvements.

“Everything about The Metabolic Weight Loss Programme makes sense, it is easy to follow and the support from Rachel is superb.”

Anita from Sussex

One-to-one support for weight loss and maintenance

Clients welcome the very personalised support provided. Time and time again, clients say that they couldn't have lost the weight without the support and encouragement of Rachel and her team.

For those who are not able to visit, a very successful remote support service is provided throughout the UK - distance is no object!

Is there hope for you?

Yes definitely, despite all your previous attempts to lose and maintain your weight.

Call now for a free consultation, absolutely no obligation.

Rachel Ricketts 01342 327396

Email rachel@rachelrickettsweightloss.co.uk

www.rachelrickettsweightloss.co.uk



Q What is the difference between traditional antiperspirants and the natural deodorants?

A Thomas says: Conventional antiperspirants reduce body odour by using a synthetic ingredient (typically aluminium chlorohydrate) to plug the skin's pores, and artificially impede one of the body's key physiological processes – sweat formation. Synthetic preservatives and antimicrobials, such as parabens, triclosan and MI (the type of ingredients found in household cleaning products), are also contained within most traditional antiperspirants.

In contrast, natural deodorants do not block pores, but instead create an invisible layer of mineral salts (potassium alum) on the skin, inhibiting the growth of odour-causing bacteria. The result is effective protection, without impeding your skin's ability to breathe. By their very nature, natural deodorants do not contain synthetic ingredients, and often contain soothing aloe vera and antibacterial honeysuckle to enhance skin-calming properties.

Q What are the benefits of lemon peel in skincare products?

A Jess says: Lemon peel powder (citrus limon peel) is made by drying then grinding lemon rind.

- The lemon peel contains up to 10 percent more vitamin C than its juice, which gives it its anti-bacterial properties that help to cleanse skin.
- It's also an astringent so it leaves the skin feeling fresh and toned.
- The grains are coarse to the touch

BEAUTY *know-how*

Got a query? Our team of experts can help you on your quest for natural gorgeousness

CLEAN UP

Extracted from native tree in its natural habitat of New South Wales, the Australian Bodycare tea tree oil, £5.99, is antiseptic and kills bad bacteria and germs, without damaging healthy skin tissue.



and work well as an exfoliant, de-congesting pores, buffing away dry skin and leaving it feeling silky smooth. It's used as one of three natural exfoliants in the MIMI Sweet Cheeks Body Rub Kit.

- These lemony scented grains of happiness also lift the mood and stimulate concentration, to leave you feeling ready to take on the day.

All these properties make lemon peel the obvious choice as a natural exfoliant to wake you up in an invigorating morning shower.

Q What does it mean when skincare products say they 'work at a cellular level'?

A Marian says: To work at a cellular level, skincare must be able to pass through the epidermis (the skin you touch and feel) and deliver ingredients to the next layer, the dermis, where small cells called fibroblasts produce collagen and elastin. Here there are blood vessels supplying nutrients and oxygen to the epidermis and there are sebaceous glands that secrete oil to keep skin smooth and supple. Most skincare aims to stimulate the production of collagen and elastin which is what we lose as we age and is seen as fine lines, wrinkles and less elasticity of skin.

MEET THE EXPERTS

We pick the brains of the industry's insiders...



THOMAS LAIRD
Managing Director of
Crystal Spring



MARIAN BOURNE
Founder of Celgenics,
premium organic and
vegan-approved skin care



JESS BAKER
Founder of MIMI Skincare
Kits and a chartered
psychologist

Put Spring in Your Skin

Spring is in the air and what a perfect time to refresh your life a little

Whether it's giving your home a good clean, de-cluttering your wardrobe, or giving your skin some much needed attention, with summer fast approaching put a little spring in your skin and help it to glow again, with our round-up of the best products.




SEA RESULTS
Mel Millis phytonutri
Qi enriching sea
plant jelly
infuses the
skin with
a powerful
combination
of the purest bio organic phytonutrients and hyaluronic acid to boost collagen levels. It also helps to balance your skin's delicate microflora and reduce the appearance of fine lines with its amino acid peptides, antioxidants, vitamins and prebiotics, £48, melmillis.co.uk

A BALANCING BLEND

JASON C-Effects c-lite skin tone balancer helps reveal youthful, luminous skin. The unique blend of ester-C, vitamin C, vitamin E and green tea effectively fights the skin-ageing free radicals. These could cause dull uneven skin tone when they trigger excess melanin production. Once protected from free radical damage, skin is smoother, brighter, and noticeably rejuvenated. £17.49, jasonnaturalcare.co.uk



SPRING'S ROSY GLOW

Get a rosy complexion with the limited edition Rosehip Blend collection from Barefoot SOS Repair + Renew. Comprising of Daily Replenishing Cream and Smoothing Eye Serum and presented in a stylish pink beauty bag, this collection is perfect for mature or dry skin. The naturally powerful skincare products are expertly blended with Rosa Mosqueta, Argan and Apricot Kernel oils. £35, barefoot-sos.com



SKIN AID

Skinade offers a unique approach to skincare – a professional product that works from the inside out! Each bottle is packed with the highest-quality collagen and essential beauty-ceuticals, delivered to the skin's inner layers in an innovative liquid form. Add this product to your daily skincare routine and you will soon see the incredible benefits to your skin, hair and nails. £60, skinade.com



TROPICAL OIL

Akamuti Organic Virgin Coconut Oil is the ultimate natural skin food! This wonderfully nourishing oil is perfect for maintaining beautiful, healthy skin from top to toe. Ideal for massage, moisturising and even hair conditioning, we won't be seen without it. £6.95, akamuti.co.uk

BRIGHTEN UP

Unveil a vibrant complexion with Simply Beautiful Collection's advanced brightening and refining vitamin ACE day and night cream with oxysomes. It contains vitamins A, C and E, along with the powerful superfood combination of tomato seed oil, olive oil and fennel oil. This potent yet effective cocktail of active ingredients creates truly radiant skin. £29, sbcgels.co.uk



BULGARIAN VALLEY BEAUTY

A brand new 100 percent natural hand and body lotion from Rossi Natural Skincare takes pure essential oils from the Bulgarian Valley of the Roses to create this divine fragranced all-round moisturiser. They have also just released their very popular Cocoa Butter and Grapeseed lotion in this great value 200ml size. £17.25, rossiskincare.com

ETHICAL BEAUTY

PHB Ethical Beauty skin repair gel with aloe vera and lavender (£13.75, 120ml) is an award-winning handmade, vegan and cruelty free skin repair gel, and a must-have product for your make-up bag! Organic aloe vera and lavender help to nourish, heal and improve the appearance of skin. It provides instant soothing relief and helps heal irritated skin, burns, acne and eczema. £13.75, phbethicalbeauty.co.uk



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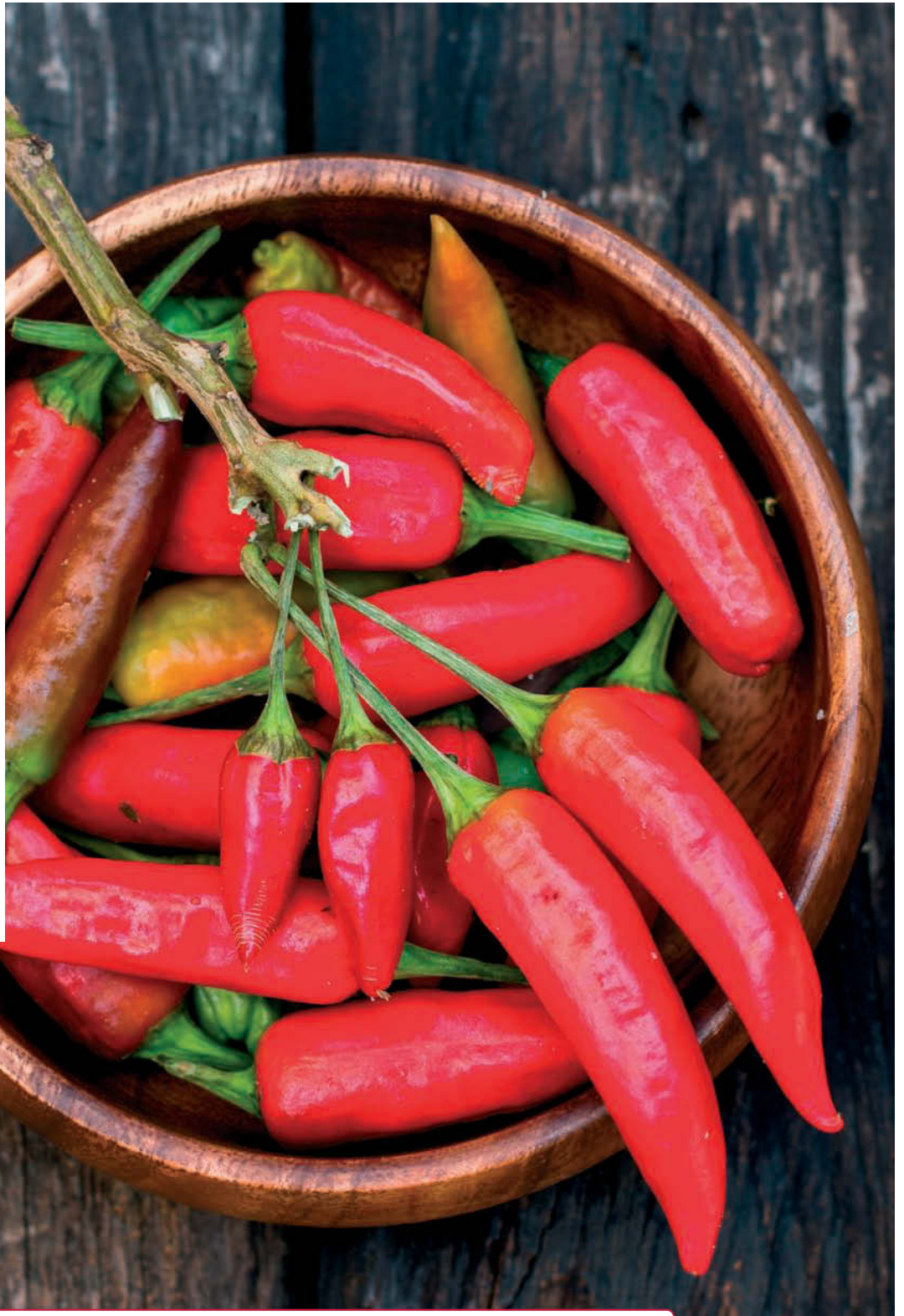
FACEBOOK.COM/10ACRE

Healing Foods

NOURISH YOUR BODY

SOME LIKE IT HOT

With obesity rising at an alarming rate, a group of researchers at the University of Wyoming think they have discovered a solution; but only if you like your food hot! The study focuses on capsaicin, the main ingredient in chilli peppers, and suggests that it could help prevent obesity and related health problems. While the correlation has yet to be proved in clinical trials, the researchers have already submitted a patent application should capsaicin be utilised as a diet-based supplement.



For more nutritious diet ideas visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk

This month...

FIND THE SUPERFOOD FOR YOU

We're all aware of the superfood staples but who are the new kids on the block?



RAW LIVING ORGANIC PURE CAMU CAMU POWDER, £9.95, RAWLIVING.EU

Step away from the oranges. If you feel a bit run down have camu camu instead, as one teaspoon of the powder provides 750 percent of your recommended daily intake of vitamin C.



DETOX YOUR WORLD ORGANIC LUCUMA POWDER, £4.99, DETOXYOURWORLD.COM

This low-glycemic powder has a maple syrup-like taste so is perfect for those with a sweet tooth. It contains beta-carotene, iron, zinc,

vitamin B3, calcium and protein, plus research suggests that lucuma may have anti-inflammatory and anti-ageing benefits.



NATURYA ORGANIC ACAI POWDER, £19.99, GOODNESSDIRECT.CO.UK

Acai may help to support the health of your blood, as its high levels of vitamin A

contribute to normal iron metabolism. Plus its calcium supports normal blood clotting, and the iron contributes to normal oxygen transport, the formation of red blood cells and haemoglobin.



INSPIRAL FREEZE-DRIED DURIAN CHUNKS, £4.65, INSPIRAL

In the middle of an energy slump? Durian is naturally rich in potassium and carbs for a great boost. The fibre, iron, vit C and vitamin B complex could improve muscle strength and blood pressure, too.

3 OF THE BEST: Cod liver oils

- 1 Healthspan Cod Liver Oil, £10.95, healthspan.co.uk
- 2 Potters Malt Extract with Cod Liver Oil Butterscotch, £6.25, hollandandbarrett.com
- 3 Seven Seas Pure Cod Liver Oil Extra High Strength Capsules, £8.05, Boots



NEWSbites

The latest scoop in the world of superfoods



IN SEASON THIS MONTH

...*Rhubarb*

- The stalks are rich in several B-complex vitamins such as folates, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, thiamin, and pantothenic acid.
- Like kale or spinach, rhubarb stalks provide good amounts of vitamin K. 100g provides 24 percent of your daily recommended intake.
- Did you know that the red colour stalks carry more vitamin A than the green varieties? This vitamin is a powerful natural antioxidant which could help to maintain your body's skin and mucus membranes.

DATE NIGHT

We'll be covering our oatcakes in the award-winning Savvy Foods Date and Sesame Spread, £3.95, facebook/savvyfoods. It's a gorgeous blend of dates, sesame, carob, agave and spices, inspired by Mediterranean cooking.

Q FOOD GURU

Carina Norris is a top nutritionist



I'm thinking of switching from olive oil to rapeseed oil for the health benefits. Do you think it's worth it?

A Carina says: Both olive and rapeseed oils are rich in monounsaturated fats, which help to lower your harmful LDL cholesterol, but extra virgin olive oil has more (75 percent) than rapeseed (62 percent). But when you compare their saturated fat content, rapeseed is better, with just 7 percent compared to 14 percent in olive oil. Rapeseed also has the benefit of higher levels of a fatty acid called alpha linolenic acid, which research has shown can help lower blood pressure and levels of harmful blood fats called triglycerides. So, both are excellent in different ways, but perhaps rapeseed could have the edge.



HEALTHY RECIPE

Salmon fillet with cucumber and potatoes

Need to spice up your mid-week lunches? Make this and store half in the fridge, then two days' lunches are sorted. Health-wise, cumin seeds are a great source of iron, coriander seeds are high in fatty acids, and fresh mint is full of antioxidants. Eat up!

SERVES 4

- 1 green sweet pepper, halved
- 500g new potatoes, halved
- ½ cucumber deseeded
- 4 spring onions, roughly chopped
- 2 tsp olive oil

- 4 x 150g salmon fillets

For the dill sauce

- 1 medium egg yolk
- A squeeze of lemon juice
- 60g butter, chilled and diced
- 1-2 tbsp freshly chopped dill

- 1 Preheat the grill on high. Put the green paper, cut-side down, on a baking sheet and grill until the skin has blackened. Set aside for 10 minutes.
- 2 Boil the potatoes for 15 minutes until they are tender, drain.
- 3 Peel the skin away from the pepper, discarding any stalk and seeds and finely chop.
- 4 Add the spring onions and cucumber to the pan of potatoes. Return the vegetables to the pan, along with the green pepper, stir in the oil and season well.
- 5 Preheat the grill and cook the salmon until cooked through.
- 6 To make the sauce, put the egg yolk in a bowl resting over a pan of simmering water. Add the lemon juice and whisk, season with a pinch of salt. Add a couple of cubes of butter and whisk in, gradually adding more butter until the mixture thickens. Continue until you've used up all the butter then stir in the dill.
- 7 Serve the salad mixture, top with the salmon, then serve with the dill sauce. For more see wecareyouenjoy.eu/en

THE TASTE barometer

GOING UP ↗

Green tea

A compound in green tea has been found to kill mouth cancer cells while leaving healthy cells undamaged.



Cooked bananas

New research has found that the iron content in cooked bananas was significantly higher than in raw bananas.



GOING DOWN ↘

Fizzy water

Carbon dioxide acts as an acid which enhances our responses to other tastes, so the fizz could cause us to crave sugar.



Fructose

Added fructose is a principal driver of diabetes and pre-diabetes, even more so than other carbohydrates, researchers found.



DID YOU KNOW?

One 28g serving of almonds supplies 35 percent of the recommended daily requirement of Vitamin E

Psst!

A new study by Loughborough University has found that participants that swapped an afternoon confectionery snack with a handful of berries consumed 134 calories fewer at their next meal.

SHOPPING LIST

Look out for these healthy food items this month

Wheyhey Banoffee Protein Ice Cream, £2.50, Ocado

We're big fans of healthy versions of ice cream, so this got eaten pretty quickly. Packed with 20g of the finest quality whey protein, it's delicious and really filling.



Coconut Collective Vanilla Yoghurt, £1.49, Waitrose

Made from the milk of the coconut, this yoghurt is free from dairy, soya, and gluten, and very rich and creamy.



Soupologie Super Boost Beetroot and Pomegranate Soup, £3, Ocado

British beets are blended with zingy pomegranates for a soup that's full of folate, to help us feel energized throughout the day.



SUPERCHARGED

foods

Try these indulgent yet super-healthy recipes from holistic nutritionist **Lee Holmes**

If you need a change from zucchini linguini, then why not introduce a new vegetable pasta into your repertoire? You should never judge a book by its cover and, although it's not the prettiest vegetable in the bunch and a bit nobbly, celeriac makes a beautiful ribbon pasta when thinly sliced. It has a wonderfully creamy and slightly nutty taste, and partners perfectly with herbed tomato sauce or puttanesca.

CELERIAC PASTA WITH HERBED TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 4

- 1 celeriac, peeled
- 500ml vegetable stock
- Herbed Tomato Sauce
- 2 tbsp cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil
- 1 red capsicum (pepper), seeds and membrane removed, very finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 7 whole tomatoes, peeled and chopped (see note)
- 3 tbsp tomato paste (concentrated purée)
- 6 drops stevia liquid
- 1/2 tsp Celtic sea salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped mixed basil and parsley

1 To make the tomato sauce, heat the olive oil in a large heavy-based frying pan over medium heat. Add the capsicum, garlic and onion and cook, stirring often, for 6-8 minutes or until the onion is translucent.

2 Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, stevia, salt and a few grinds of black pepper. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until the sauce thickens. Stir in the basil and parsley and taste for salt and pepper, adjusting if necessary. Set aside to cool.

3 Meanwhile, to make the pasta, use a mandolin or knife to cut the celeriac into fine ribbons. Heat the vegetable stock to a simmer. Place the

celeriac in the simmering stock and cook for 3 minutes, or until tender. Serve the pasta topped with the tomato sauce.

Note: The tomato sauce will keep in the fridge in a sterile, tightly sealed jar for up to a week. It can also be frozen for up to a month in a sealed container. To peel the tomatoes, carefully make a slit down one side of each tomato and place in a large bowl. Top with boiling water, ensuring they are well covered, then leave them for a few minutes. Before straining off the water, test one to ensure that they are ready – the skin should peel off easily. If it does, strain the tomatoes and allow to cool before peeling them.



This pizza is the perfect indulgence, without the guilt. There are two options for bases to choose from – both deliver all the satisfaction of a regular pizza, but without the gnawing tummy pain that accompanies gluten-filled crusts. Quick and easy to make, the bases are crisp, yet soft and light with a subtle texture, and the herbs and spices add an extra flavour boost.

FRIDAY NIGHT PIZZA

MAKES A 30CM PIZZA

- 3 tbsp tomato paste (concentrated purée)
- 60g crumbled goat's cheese
- 4 tomatoes, thinly sliced
- nutritional yeast flakes, to serve


Spinach base

- cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, for greasing
- 1 cup English spinach leaves
- 1 organic egg, whisked
- 100g grated cheddar cheese
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- Celtic sea salt
- freshly ground black pepper

Cauliflower base

- cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, for greasing
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 cup cooked, shredded cauliflower
- 100g almond meal
- 1/2 cup nutritional yeast flakes
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried Italian herbs
- pinch of caraway seeds

- 1 To make the spinach base, preheat the oven to 220°C/gas 7 and lightly grease a 30cm pizza tray with olive oil.
- 2 Place the spinach leaves in a food processor and pulse.
- 3 Place the egg, cheese and herbs in a bowl and add the spinach. Stir to combine well and season.
- 4 Spread the dough evenly onto the prepared pizza tray and bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes, or until the edges begin to brown.
- 5 Remove from the oven and set the grill (broiler) to high. Top the base with the tomato paste, goat's cheese and tomato slices and grill for 2-3 minutes.
- 6 Sprinkle with nutritional yeast flakes and serve.
- 7 If you are using the cauliflower base, preheat the oven to 230°C/gas 8 and lightly grease a 30cm (12inch) pizza tray with olive oil.
- 8 Place the chia seeds and 60ml of water in a bowl and set aside for 15 minutes.
- 9 Add the soaked chia seeds to a large bowl with all the other ingredients and mix well.
- 10 Spread the dough evenly onto the prepared pizza tray and bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes, or until the edges begin to brown.
- 11 Remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Preheat the grill (broiler) to high. Top the base with the tomato paste, goat's cheese and tomato slices and grill for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with nutritional yeast flakes and serve.



Nachos are the ultimate chopping-board meal. Scatter chips in a basket, then decorate your board with small bowls of diced tomatoes and cucumber, Cashew Sour Cream and Creamy Avocado Dressing, ready for a free-for-all.

To veganise: Substitute the egg with 3 tablespoons ground or whole chia or flaxseeds soaked in 125 ml of water for 15 minutes.

Creamy avocado dressing

Avocados are uniquely decadent dwellers in the plant world. Silky, buttery and smooth, they supply high fulfilment, even when eaten alone. Blended into a dressing, they offer your salad a gorgeous pop of yellowy green and a burst of good fats that will moisturise your body from the inside out.

- 1 avocado, peeled and stone removed
- 1 heaped tsp cumin powder
- juice of 1 large lime
- big pinch of Celtic sea salt
- 1 tbsp cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil

Blend all the ingredients except the olive oil with 2 tablespoons of filtered water in a food processor until smooth. With the motor still running, add the olive oil very slowly in a thin stream until the desired creaminess is reached.

This will keep for 3-4 days in an airtight container in the fridge.

Cashew sour cream

- 155g raw, unsalted cashews
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar

- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus 1 tsp extra
- 1/4 tsp Celtic sea salt

Soak the cashews for 2 hours in filtered water. Rinse and drain.

Place all the ingredients in a food processor with 125ml of filtered water and blend until smooth. You may need to add a little more filtered water to reach your desired consistency.

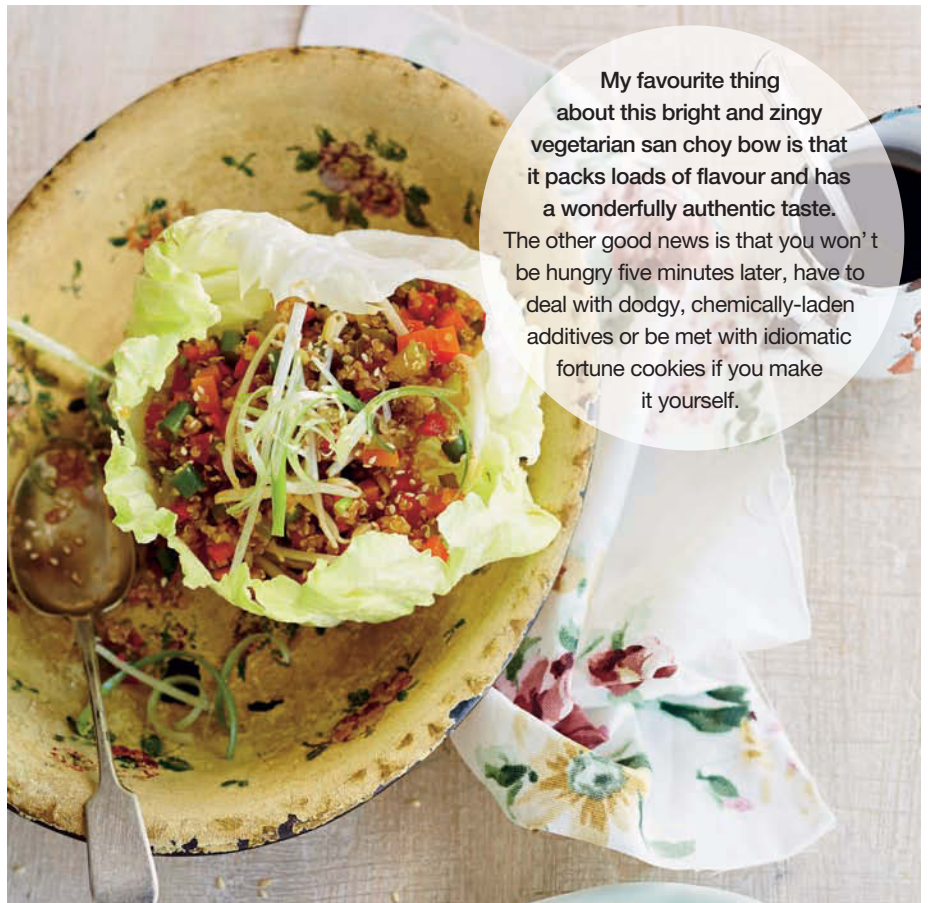
This will keep for 2-3 days in an airtight container in the fridge.

MUCHOS NACHOS

SERVES 3-4

- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- Cashew sour cream, see below
- Creamy avocado dressing, see below
- coriander sprigs, to serve
- nachos chips
- 100g almond meal
- 1 large organic egg
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp grated orange zest
- 1 tsp Celtic sea salt

- 1 To make the chips, preheat the oven to 180°C
- 2 Place all the chip ingredients in a large bowl and mix with a wooden spoon to form a dough.
- 3 Place the dough on a clean work surface between two pieces of baking paper. Roll the dough out until it is 2mm thick.
- 4 Remove the top piece of baking paper and transfer the dough and bottom piece of baking paper to a baking tray. Using a sharp knife, deeply score the dough every 3cm, then do the same in the opposite direction so you form squares.
- 5 Bake in the oven for 12 minutes. Allow to cool before breaking them apart.
- 6 To assemble the nachos, place the Nachos chips on a chopping board, and top with the remaining ingredients. Any leftover chips will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 days.



My favourite thing about this bright and zingy vegetarian san choy bow is that it packs loads of flavour and has a wonderfully authentic taste. The other good news is that you won't be hungry five minutes later, have to deal with dodgy, chemically-laden additives or be met with idiomatic fortune cookies if you make it yourself.

QUINOA SAN CHOY BOW

SERVES 4

- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 115g bean sprouts
- 60g chopped green beans
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 red capsicum (pepper), seeds and membrane removed, chopped
- 1 green capsicum, seeds and membrane removed, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 2 red chillies, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, diced
- 1 large piece of ginger, finely grated
- 270g cooked quinoa
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 3 tbsp wheat-free tamari
- 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Celtic sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 chilled iceberg lettuce leaves
- 2 tsp chopped coriander leaves
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 3-4 spring onions, chopped

- 1 Heat the sesame oil in a wok or frying pan over medium heat and add the bean sprouts, green beans, carrot, capsicum, celery, chilli, garlic and ginger. Stir-fry for 7-10 minutes or until slightly browned. Add the quinoa, apple cider vinegar, tamari and lemon juice and cook for 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 2 Remove from the heat and spoon the mixture into the lettuce. Garnish with the coriander leaves, toasted sesame seeds and spring onions and enjoy.

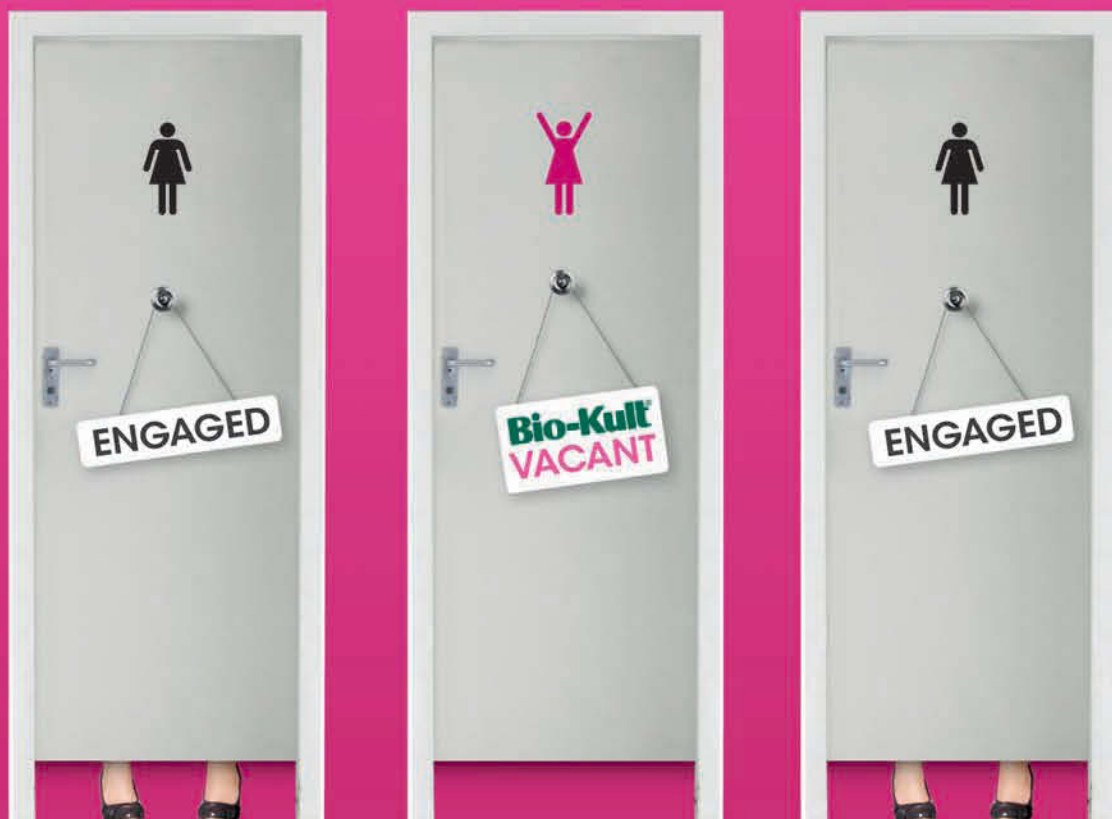


HEALTH BENEFITS

Quinoa has many nutritional benefits: it's high in protein, low in carbohydrates, gluten-free, has a low GI and is an easy ingredient to digest. When cooking quinoa, remember to rinse it well and cook for approximately 12 minutes until all the water has been absorbed. You can also cook quinoa in stock or with herbs to create a flavoursome base for any meal.

Supercharged Food: Eat Clean, Green & Vegetarian by Lee Holmes (£14.99 Murdoch Books). Photography: Steve Brown and Cath Muscat

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UNDER THE GRILL:

Fresh vs Frozen Which is healthier?

Each month top nutritionist Ian Marber tackles the hottest topics in the world of food



The debate about fresh vs frozen food has rumbled on for many years. I suspect that the belief that fresh is always best is based in snobbery as much as anything else, as fresh food was viewed as more nutritious and expensive. Frozen food came from second-rate supermarkets and was something that you had lurking in the freezer for emergencies. It denoted laziness and as such it was never the food of choice.



In fact, many frozen foods are superior to their so-called fresh alternatives. Their nutritional content is suspended in ice immediately after harvest rather than being allowed to diminish in storage.

In 2013 two UK food research companies tested

fresh and frozen fruits and veg and found that for some (blueberries, green beans, carrots, broccoli, spinach and sprouts), antioxidant levels were higher in frozen.

Remember that 'fresh' might not be fresh as in 'just picked'. Many fresh foods are harvested in a slightly unripe state, then allowed to mature in cold storage, reaching their optimum ripeness around the time they are in store. This could be anything from a couple of days to three weeks. While this is commercially sensible it isn't exactly what we understand from the term 'fresh'.

In the case of frozen, produce is often blanched before freezing which can halt the ripening process. A moment in boiling water can neutralise enzymes that are partially responsible for ripening. But the boiling water can also reduce levels of water-soluble nutrients such as vitamin C and the B group. This may explain why researchers found that levels of these were found to be more or less the same as in fresh.

Another benefit of frozen foods is that you can use however much you want, reducing waste as you can dish out small amounts rather than allowing food to spoil.

When it comes to meat and fish, it's those with the most fat in them that freeze well as the higher the fat, the lower the water content which means fewer ice crystals. This explains why fatty fish such as salmon and tuna freeze better than white fish. Frozen meat, poultry and fish should be used within six months as even in this state of suspended animation the quality of the proteins deteriorate over long periods. Food hygiene is an issue too, as frozen animal produce should be allowed to thaw in the fridge, on a plate or in a sealed box away from fresh food, rather than at room temperature.

While I think frozen foods are a wonderful alternative, I am drawn to fresh where possible. That said, my freezer contains often-used packs of peas, beans and fruits, together with fish and meat. If I were so minded I wouldn't have to go near a food shop for many weeks!



AND So To Bed

In the morning nothing beats that elusive feeling of waking up refreshed and ready to take on the day!

It's more important than ever before to get good shut-eye, what with the busy, potentially stressful lives we lead. Not to fear, we've got the products that could help you get a good night's sleep, to feel bright and perky all of the following day.

JASMINE SILK

This beautiful soft handmade eye mask is filled with pure mulberry silk floss covered in super soft and smooth heavyweight charmeuse silk. It softly caresses the delicate eye area, and the natural amino acids present in the silk are thought to be beneficial for the skin.

Designed to totally block out light as if sleeping in total darkness, it is perfect for both home and travel use – so much nicer than airline eye-masks! £11, jasminesilk.com



SLEEPING DOUGH

Mohdoh Sleep is an effective, fun way of dealing with restlessness, insomnia or sleep problems. Mould the dough to vapourise and inhale the selected essential oils; the special colour of the Sleep dough helps to relax tired minds and promote natural sleep. Sleep is non-toxic and uses pure, natural essential oils. £4.99, mohdoh.co.uk



NEW NORDIC

New Nordic has developed an all-natural aid to your sleep problems.

Melissa Dream is a unique tablet, manufactured in Sweden, that supports the body in maintaining a normal restful sleep. You can purchase Melissa Dream from leading health foods stores priced at £7.99 for 20 and £14.99 for 40. £14.99, newnordic.co.uk



PEAR-FECT SKIN

Antipodes Avocado Pear Night Cream, favoured by supermodel du jour Cara Delevingne, is scientifically proven to stimulate optimal synthesis of type I collagen production in human fibroblast skin cells by up to an impressive 92 percent. Human clinical trials reveal its ability to reduce wrinkle depth by 22 percent, skin roughness by 34 percent and dryness by 85.7 percent. Formulated with new Vinanza grape and manuka honey Active 20+. £34.99, antipodesnature.com



NIGHT TIME TEA

Combining a sleepy crush of oat flower, soothing lavender, and silky-sweet limeflower together with the magic of valerian, Pukka Night Time Tea is the perfect way to get ready for bed. Try a cup before bedtime if you're a night owl, feeling stressed or purely fancy a caffeine-free hot drink. £2.39, Ocado.com



LIGHT UP

Compact, light and portable, the Lifemax SAD Therapy Light can be used anywhere that has a mains plug and is complete with digital switching power supply for worldwide use. For ease of use, it also incorporates an adjustable angled stand or can be wall mounted. Plus it is also known to help combat the effects of jet lag so perfect for those long distance summer holidays! £129.99, slumberslumber.com



9 Anxiety-busting FOODS

Feel calm and collected with these hero eats for a healthy nervous system, says medicinal chef **Dale Pinnock**

There are some foods that are real champions when it comes to supporting the overall health of the nervous system and these should feature regularly on your anxiety-busting shopping list. Here are my must-haves...

Berries

Blueberries and blackberries. I am grouping these together as they both have almost identical properties. They are very rich sources of a group of compounds called flavonoids. These have been shown to have significant effect upon the cardiovascular system and, as such, may have a positive impact upon the brain. What they do is cause blood vessels to relax, by stimulating the production of a chemical called nitric oxide by the vital inner skin that lines all of our blood vessels. Nitric oxide then causes the muscular walls of the blood vessels to relax, which makes the vessel wider. The consequence of this is that there is an important enhancement of circulation to the peripheries. Long story short, there is also, naturally improved blood flow to the brain. Here in the UK, the University of Reading has been studying this with some rather promising preliminary results.

Cocoa

Who said that healthy food was never tasty? I will be the bearer of great news: chocolate is good for you! There you go, what a revelation. OK... maybe I should back peddle a little and say that cocoa is good for you, especially for the health of our nervous systems and for making us feel really quite

good. Firstly, cocoa contains very high levels of magnesium that help us feel relaxed. The most exciting thing, though, is a presence of something called PEA, or phenylethylamine. This is a neurotransmitter that is released in the brain when we fall in love and just a small amount can give us wonderful, welcome feelings of bliss and euphoria.

Eggs

Eggs are an incredible, complete protein. They are very low GI so can keep blood sugar levels nice and stable. They are also a very rich source of

choline, which is important for memory and learning. You can also get eggs that have added omega 3; these will always be my top choice at the supermarket shelf.

Kale

Kale is definitely the mothership of all green leafy vegetables. Like all greens, it is very dense in the mineral magnesium that can have a relaxing effect on the nervous system and the muscles so can really aid relaxation during a period of high anxiety. Kale also has good amounts of iron and vitamin C, to boot.

Lentils

Lentils, like other legumes, are incredibly rich sources of most of the B vitamins, so provide a multitude of benefits for the brain and nervous systems, regulating many of their important functions.

Mackerel

I just adore mackerel. It does have a strong flavour, so is one for the true fish fans. However, it is incredibly rich in omega 3 fatty acids and selenium and should be eaten at least once a week.

Quinoa

Quinoa gives you a tasty, simple to prepare alternative to refined carbohydrates that has a very low impact upon blood sugar and actually contains quite a lot of protein, too. This protein further slows down the release of sugars from its own carbs and those of whatever else you eat with it!

Salmon

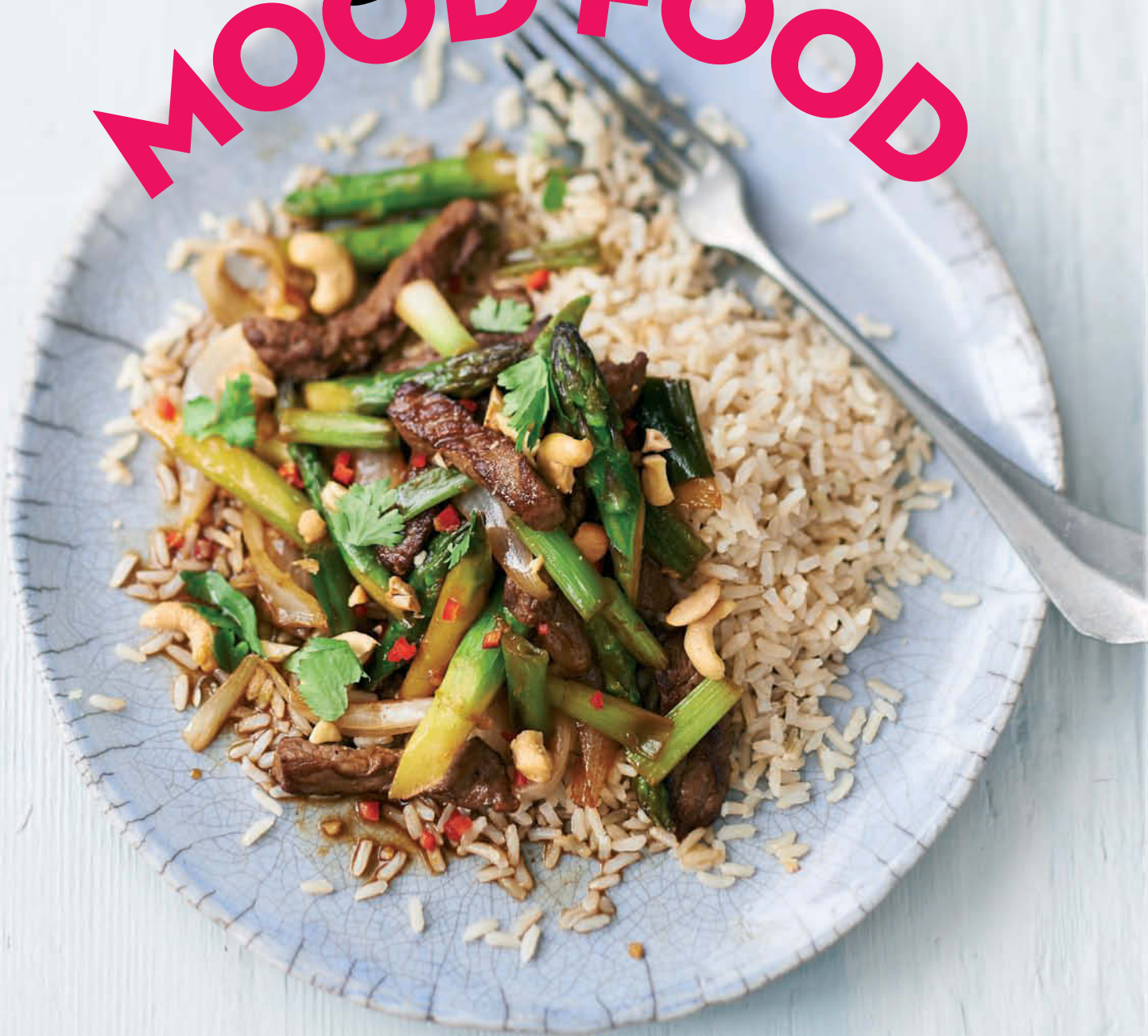
One of my absolute favourite ingredients! Versatile and packed with the all-important omega 3 fatty acids that support the health and functioning of the myelin sheath. Go for a mid-range pack of salmon; I personally tend to buy Scottish farmed fish.

Spinach

Green leafy spinach is another real staple ingredient of mine. It is a great source of non-haem iron, and also of magnesium – two vital minerals for the healthy functioning of the nervous system.



Good MOOD FOOD



Spring into April with a lighter menu to lift your mood and revitalise your energy levels. We love these seasonal offerings from chef and food writer **Lisa Roukin**

BEEF WITH ASPARAGUS AND TERIYAKI SAUCE

SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp groundnut oil
- 500g beef rump or sirloin steak, sliced thinly
- 1 large brown onion, sliced thinly
- 340g asparagus, peeled and cut into three pieces diagonally
- 3 spring onions, cut into 3cm slices
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed

- 1 tbsp palm sugar
- 2 tbsp teriyaki sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp sesame oil

FOR THE GARNISH:

- 2 tbsp roasted cashew nuts
- 1 small chilli, sliced (optional)
- Bunch of fresh coriander
- Brown rice

1 Prepare your asparagus by taking the root end off and, using a vegetable peeler, remove the top layer off around the asparagus (2.5cm from the bottom of the tip). Then cut it up into three pieces diagonally.

2 Now prepare your spring onions cutting them into 3cm slices. Slice the beef in 1.5cm strips across the length of the piece.

3 Heat half the oil in a wok, stir-fry the beef in batches until browned, then transfer to a plate to rest. Mix the teriyaki sauce, soy sauce, sugar and one tablespoon of water, then set aside.

4 Heat the remaining oil in the wok and stir-fry the onion until soft and translucent, then add the asparagus and continue cooking for 10-12 minutes until al dente.

5 Return the beef to the wok with the garlic and ginger and cook for 30 seconds. Add the spring onions, stir-fry for two minutes, then add the sauce and cook for a further minute.

6 Drizzle with the sesame oil, then scatter with cashew nuts and sliced chilli (optional) and garnish with coriander. Serve immediately with steamed brown rice or gluten-free noodles.



“Eat what nourishes your body, do what nourishes your soul, think what nourishes your mind”

HEIRLOOM TOMATO, PUY LENTIL AND HALLOUMI SALAD

SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 heirloom tomatoes, each cut into 4-5 slices
- 150g cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 large courgette, julienned with vegetable peeler (or vegetable spiral cutter)
- ¼ red onion, sliced half moons
- 1 avocado, cubed
- 100g puy lentils (pre-cooked)
- 250g halloumi cheese, cut into 10 slices
- 1 large bunch chopped coriander
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ tbsp agave syrup
- Sea salt and black pepper

FOR THE GARNISH:
Fresh coriander

1 Peel the courgette using a julienne vegetable peeler. Using a non-stick frying pan, add the halloumi in two batches. Cook on a medium heat on each side for about two minutes until lightly browned. Place on a plate to cool and drizzle with half a tablespoon agave syrup.

2 In a large mixing bowl add the cherry tomatoes, puy lentils, onion, coriander, avocado, courgette spirals and season to taste.

3 Toss the salad lightly with two tablespoons olive oil and half a tablespoon balsamic vinegar. On a serving platter, lay out the heirloom tomatoes, place the mixed salad over the top. Scatter the halloumi around the salad, and garnish with coriander.

Extracted from *My Relationship With Food* by Lisa Roukin, (£25, myrelationshipwithfood.com)

Mother's Day Sunday 15th March

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Naturally JO WOOD

Our green guru says get healthy and go back to your roots



Root vegetables might not be the most glamorous of foods, but under that soil lie some of the most nutritious produce we can eat.

These vegetables' ability to absorb vitamins and nutrients from the soil is amazing. In fact, because they do most of their growing underground, this ability is second to none. That means that planting them in good organic soil is absolutely imperative. In the same way in which we are conscious about what we put in our bodies, we should be conscious of what vegetables put in theirs, or put another way, what they consume to grow. It sounds so simple but so often we are faced with food grown in nutritionally valueless soil and we wonder where the flavour and goodness has gone.

Most root vegetables that have been grown well are high in vitamins A, B, C and D. Many have fantastic healing properties and all are stuffed full of antioxidants. Because of their ability to draw in the goodness from soil, I like to grow my own veg, but if you don't have time or space, choose organic.

In general, root vegetables have no fat and are low in calories. But it is their phytonutrients that I want to tell you about. These include antioxidants, which fight free radicals in our bodies. We need these guys fighting for us more and more in this toxified world. The more intense a vegetable's colour, the more phytonutrients it contains. So those intensely red beets? Stuffed full of goodness!

As it turns out, root vegetables have also been used for medicinal purposes throughout time. We know of the healing properties of garlic, ginseng and ginger, but did you know that burdock is said to promote good skin health or that fennel root is very good for the digestive tract? The radish is good for the liver, stomach, kidneys, bladder and lungs and purifies the blood. Beetroot is good for eye health and the nervous system, plus helps prevent heart disease and cancer and is great before a workout. Onions support the cardiovascular system, so benefit the heart and blood vessels. Sweet potatoes help maintain blood sugar levels and are an anti-inflammatory. The list goes on and on.

Get digging

There are so many root vegetables that most of us have never tried. We are familiar with the regular ones (potatoes, carrots etc) and just five years ago in the UK that was all we could get our hands on but now there are so many more unusual ones available: daikon, rutabaga, yuca, jicama, maca root and celeriac. A big time favourite of mine is fresh turmeric, a relative of ginger. It has been used by the Indians and Chinese for centuries in both food and medicine, it is a great anti-inflammatory with astounding healing powers. I try to have fresh turmeric at least three times a week. It's fabulous grated on salad or as a fresh squeezed shot. The message this month is don't overlook those knobbly roots and get digging. They are wonderfully delicious and full of goodness. So on those cold nights a nice root veg hot pot is definitely the way to go.

Top eats:

- Fresh turmeric to grate raw
- Coconut oil to cook with
- Pink Himalayan sea salt
- Raw coconut water

Best read of the month:

Toxic World, Toxic People by Anna Rodgers (Soul Rocks).



TOXIC *home syndrome*

Those cleaning products, plastics and pots and pans could be doing you serious harm says our complementary medicine expert **Jayne Goddard**

The development of chemicals in the last hundred or so years that would serve to help us be cleaner, live more efficiently and generally 'improve' our lives has had a devastating effect upon our immune systems.

It is estimated that anyone living in a 'westernised' environment encounters up to 2,100,000 man-made chemical exposures every day. The truth is that we simply don't know what most of these chemicals do – and they have never been researched in combination. We are sitting on the top of a ticking time-bomb – and only time will really tell us about the true effects on our health.

The potential dangers of these chemical exposures are worrying to say the least, as they are associated with numerous health issues, including cancer, obesity, hormone disruption, dementia and much more. These toxic chemicals also accelerate ageing and many of the health concerns that we associate with that.

In this article we'll look at just a few of the harmful chemicals in your kitchen – and ways that you can avoid them or find substitutes that really work.

Antibacterial soap

Many commercially available antibacterial soaps (and toothpastes) on the market boast that they contain the antimicrobial chemical triclosan. This chemical is believed to disrupt thyroid function and hormone levels in people; and furthermore, when it goes down your drain and eventually mixes with wastewater, it has been shown to cause sex changes in aquatic life.



JAYNE GODDARD

is president of The Complementary Medical Association (The CMA) and considered to be one of the world's leading experts in the field of complementary medicine and natural, holistic health care. Jayne runs an international practice and can be contacted at Jayney@The-CMA.org.uk to arrange personal health consultations.

Even more worrying is that overuse of this and other anti-bacterial chemicals is promoting the growth of dangerous bacteria that are increasingly becoming immune to antibiotics and other anti-bacterial substances.

■ **BETTER ALTERNATIVE:** Good old-fashioned soap and warm water kills just as many germs as the chemical soaps. If you have to use a hand sanitizer, choose an alcohol-based product that doesn't contain triclosan, triclocarban or any other synthetic substances described as anti-bacterial or anti-microbial.

Synthetic fragrances

The chemical compounds we are most often exposed to in our kitchens are fragrances. These surface in soaps, laundry detergents, fabric softeners, dryer sheets, cleaning supplies and disinfectants. Outside the kitchen they are found in abundance in air fresheners, deodorisers, shampoos, hair

sprays, gels, lotions, sunscreens, perfumes, powders and scented candles. Fragrances are a group of chemicals that are well worth the time and effort to avoid. The words 'fragrance' or 'parfum' on product labels can act as an euphemism for hundreds of harmful chemicals that are known to be carcinogens, endocrine disrupters and reproductive toxicants.

■ **BETTER ALTERNATIVE:** Freshen the air with better ventilation and by setting out a saucer of bicarbonate of soda. You also can place a bowl of white vinegar in a room to dispel a stale smell. I often spritz my environment with a small spray bottle containing water and a few drops of my favourite essential oils.

Harsh cleaning products

Isn't it really quite scary that we inadvertently contaminate our air when we use harsh chemicals – some of which are known to cause cancer – to 'clean' our homes? Ammonia can trigger asthma attacks, and harsh oven cleaners and drain openers can cause respiratory damage or burn the skin of anyone who comes into contact with them – and these chemicals are even more dangerous to children, who have much lower body mass than adults.

■ **BETTER ALTERNATIVE:** Take any synthetic cleaner with an ingredient list that reads like a chemistry textbook to your local recycling centre – they'll know how to dispose of these chemicals properly – don't pour them down the drain as they end up in our water supply! (Check those products which boast 'natural ingredients' as there are a great many synthetic products out there which try to promote their 'green' credentials by adding a few natural products to a synthetic chemical soup – and there's very little labeling legislation in place to stop this grossly misleading practice.)





INSTEAD TRY THESE – they really work:

■ Make a general, ridiculously inexpensive and highly effective cleaning solution from one part white vinegar and nine parts water – this will kill 90 percent of bacteria and many spores. Spray it on and let it dry to a nice shine on its own. When you're finished using a vinegar cleaning solution, dump it down your kitchen sink or toilet for additional odour control.

■ When cleaning in the kitchen after preparing meat, use hot, soapy water first and then follow with the vinegar-water solution.

Non-stick pans

When you're cooking with non-stick pots and pans, you're actually baking on plastic. That smooth nonstick surface is made from a synthetic material known as perfluoroalkyl acid,

a group of chemicals that have been linked to high cholesterol, ADHD and thyroid disease. They're also potent sperm killers and are suspected of contributing to female infertility.

■ **BETTER ALTERNATIVE:** Opt for safer cookware like glass or stainless steel.

Plastics and tinned food

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical that is linked to hormone disruption – leading to male infertility, diabetes, heart disease, aggressive behavior in children and other problems. BPA is used in some plastic bottles and most tinned-food containers, and while some manufacturers are phasing the chemical out of their cans, it's not clear that the replacements are totally safe either. In 2010, scientists found

RETREAT OFFER

Jayne Goddard is running a unique holistic rejuvenation retreat in Spain in May 24-31 and she is offering a very special discount to *Natural Health* readers: Normally £1,997, book before the end of April to receive £600 discount! This special retreat includes detox, yoga, raw plant-based gourmet food, yoga, meditation and, best of all, a free 1-2-1 health MOT with Jayney personally worth over £1500! CMAretreats.com

that we also absorb BPA from cash-register receipts through our skin.

■ **BETTER ALTERNATIVE:** Go for fresh or frozen fruits and veggies, and bypass tins as often as possible. Reduce your chemical exposure further by opting for organic food wherever possible. Don't store food or drinks in plastic containers unless they state that they are BPA-free. And always say 'no thanks' to receipts for minor purchases like coffee, and at the ATM.

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Life & Style

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO NATURAL LIVING

BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Why not embrace the new season with a new wardrobe? People Tree's new Artisan and Handicraft spring collection includes a mix of ethnic-inspired hand block prints, ditzy florals and dusty pastels, in Fairtrade organic cotton, poplin and jersey materials. They've even teamed up with fashion and lifestyle designer Orla Kiely for an exclusive capsule collection. So what are you waiting for?

Palm Print Dress, £85
peopletree.co.uk



For more natural living ideas visit naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk



NEW FOR OLD

Love the idea of spanking new sofas this spring? Hate the waste (and expense!) of dumping furniture that's become worn or grubby? A new range of fabrics gives you the chance to double up your good deeds for the environment. Homeware brand Bamz, specialising in Ikea-compatible covers, has launched Respect: a new range produced from surplus textiles from the fashion industry. Manufactured without water or dyes, they even make use of recycled plastic bottles! bamz.com



LIGHT UP

Candles are central to so many of our every day rituals, but did you know many natural waxes, including those based on soya, palm or castor, are often made from genetically-modified crops? We love Corpo Sancto's Bergamot Wood Wick Candle (£28). Hand-poured by artisans in Brighton, it burns rapeseed wax – GM-free, carbon-neutral and sustainably-produced. Find nine more scents at corpo-sancto.com

ECOzone

Planet-friendly news and tips for a healthier life



MOO-SIC TO OUR EARS!

There's great news from the Soil Association, which has reported a rise in sales of organically-certified goods for the second year running. One in four UK households bought organic milk in 2014, making the UK the world's second biggest market for this high-welfare, low-impact form of dairy farming. With discounter Aldi joining other supermarkets to stock organic produce, now's the time to give it a try!

Earth Calling

Ready for annual Earth Day on April 22nd? It's time to get involved...

- 1 How many planets would it take to sustain your lifestyle? Calculate your footprint at footprint.wwf.org.uk
- 2 Pledge your 'act of green' at earthday.org/takeaction, where you'll find plenty of ideas from eating less meat to refusing junk mail.
- 3 Push for political change. Green issues are set to be hot topics in this May's election. Vote wisely!

Good news for Asia's most endangered species; 13 of the continent's countries have joined forces to stamp out poaching





DID YOU KNOW?

73% of Brits believe the Government should give more support to the renewable energy sector

THE GREEN SCENE

READY, STEADY, SOW!

Spring's almost upon us, time to get your hands dirty says Hayley Choristine of the Soil Association



Wait for warmth

Although some crops like rocket will germinate at temperatures as low as 4°C most prefer it at 15-25°C. Is it warm enough to sit on the ground in your underpants? If not then don't put the seed in.

Make your move

Choose the right moment to prepare your soil. Going in when it's too wet or too dry can damage the soil and stop seeds germinating. If you've got heavy soil and can't get a good tilth, try covering your seeds with a sprinkling of compost instead of soil.

Keep an eye

Seeds need moisture to germinate and grow, but give them too much and they can rot. Check the weather forecast and hold off if there's lots of rain in early spring. Facing a drought? Keep an eye on the seedlings – they may need a top up.

Find out how your gardening skills fit into a bigger picture at soilassociation.org/getinvolved

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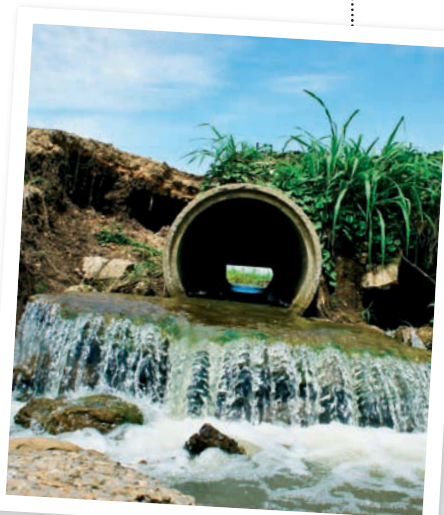
What do you mean you don't have a large aquatic mammal in your toilet cistern? Hippo the Water Saver will save between one and two litres per flush. Get one.

... for about £30

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Scottish and Welsh Governments have slapped a moratorium on fracking (AKA hydraulic fracturing) until the environment and health impacts can be established

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SPOTLIGHT ON MACDONALD ELMERS COURT

Katy Evans heads to Hampshire
for a picturesque spa break

It's a blindingly sunny morning when my husband and I undertake the long drive from the eastern-most reaches of Essex down to the very bottom of Hampshire, through beautiful New Forest countryside.

As it turns out, great hospitality is the order of the day for the duration of our two-night stay at this picturesque hotel complex, which comprises the original Tudor building with its imposing red-brick chimneys, and small blocks of one and two-bedroom apartments, some of which are time share for those who like to get away from home on a more regular basis.

Elmers Court is one of around 50 MacDonald Hotels throughout the UK – with more in Spain and Portugal – and while each may differ in location and architecture, they all aim to put impeccable service at the heart of their business, which is certainly the case at Elmers Court. The estate is set in 23 acres of landscaped gardens and has stunning views over the Solent, and is just a short distance from the marina town of Lymington with its ferry service to the Isle of Wight. The clientele are mostly retired couples and young families, making it a laid back, peaceful – unless you're by the pool when the little ones come to play – place to escape for a break.

Child's play

The outdoor pool area is ideal for young families, with its generously sized kids' section and 25m lap pool. There's also a children's outdoor play area, kids' games, a large outdoor draughts

board, tennis and table tennis, putting, croquet and volley ball to keep younger ones entertained.

Indoors you'll find all the facilities you'd expect at a leisure centre, with squash courts, indoor pool, and a newly refurbished technogym, to which I lost my personal trainer husband at least twice a day – he's fussy about his gym equipment so it must have been good!

Pamper time

I decide to indulge myself with an Elemis massage and rose facial at the Vital Health &



after my deeply relaxing treatment.

MacDonald waiting staff go out of their way to be courteous and helpful. There's an obvious Scottish theme to the menu, what with black pudding and tatties as part of the fry-up breakfast, Scottish smoked salmon, and a scottish steak club. Those who want the full fine dining experience can head out to the Waterford restaurant in the main house, with beautifully cooked and presented dishes based on local produce.

Verdict: Glorious surroundings with something for all the family. I recommended it to my brother and sister-in-law who have a 14-month old and were looking for holiday ideas.

The cost: The price of a two-bedroom one-bathroom apartment for four nights is £450-£500 (accommodation only).

INFORMATION

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Family matters

The latest news and holistic views to keep your clan in tip-top shape

GREAT ESCAPE

Baby on board? Retreat-Yourself is a new company based in the Cotswolds specialising in pregnancy and motherhood retreats offering luxury breaks for mums and mums-to-be. As well as single day retreats, there are mid-week and weekend ones focused on quality R&R, too. retreat-yourself.co.uk

School stories

Delaying school entry for children could cause poorer academic performance, according to new research from the University of Warwick – important news for parents keen to hold their children back a year because they were born prematurely or in the summer months.

SNOOZE AND LOSE?

Napping beyond the age of two is linked to poorer sleep quality in young children, although the impact on behaviour and development is less clear-cut, finds an analysis of the available evidence published online in Archives of Disease in Childhood.

TIME TRIALS

Children whose parents experience time pressure are more likely to have mental health problems, a researcher has found. Children's sense of wellbeing largely reflects the circumstances in which their parents find themselves, but few scientific studies have addressed the subject head-on, says Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdottir.

Amazing Grace

Janey Lee Grace on the secrets to a perfect night's sleep

We are nation of insomniacs. From new mums praying their babies will let them get a full night to adults constantly getting up to go to the loo, the UK has an issue with restorative sleep. The answer isn't in popping a pill; often it's about getting the environment right. There's no excuse for leaving electrical gadgets switched on. I constantly meet people who use their smartphones as alarm clocks (including my own teenage boys). My advice: invest in an old-style one (I've just bought them for my kids – I'll let you know how it goes). Don't watch the TV or your tablet last thing at night either; the blue light emitted from iPads sends the wrong signals to the brain and doesn't aid restorative sleep. Dr Sohreh Roked is a holistic doctor and author of *The Tiredness Cure – How to beat fatigue and feel great for good* (published by Vermillion). She agrees that electrical appliances stimulate the brain and won't aid sleep but she even believes that reading is too stimulating! She suggests taking at least 30 minutes to wind down. You can listen to relaxing music and use the time to take stock of your day. I'm guessing it's ok to read your younger ones a story, though (hope so, I'm getting well into the latest Michael Morpurgo). And if, like me, you tend to bribe the kids to let you have a lie-in at weekends, think again. Advice suggests that we should try to sleep the same amount of hours every night and go to bed and wake up at roughly the same time, even at weekends. It may sound boring, but getting into a routine with your sleep is a great way to regain your vitality. Getting up at 6.45am even on weekends? I'm drowsy just thinking about it!



Janey Lee Grace is the author of *Look Great Naturally* and runs the website imperfectlynatural.com

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Dr David McCollum
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Green machine

Safia Minney, founder and CEO of People Tree (peopletree.co.uk) on what her mother means to her

Mothers are our role models. They set our moral compass and teach us what is culturally and socially expected of us. Much of this is subliminal of course.

My mum, after my father died aged 39, leaving three small kids, threw herself into voluntary social work housing families of refugees from Uganda, caring for physically and mentally challenged people, and we fundraised through bake sales and sales of potted geraniums, mum's various community projects.

I tagged along. I enjoyed watching her friendliness and how active she was. She had been quite shy and is Swiss so she was really making her new home. She had courage! She talked about the people as though they were family and close friends and in this way shaped my trust in humanity and brought down the barriers between our inner circle and the world.

As a nine year old, I learnt quickly that we are all the same. Only that faced with difficult circumstances we have to work together to overcome problems and not take the obvious for granted: our mental and physical health, our homes, our access to education and our neighbours. When your mum says 'We're lucky to have food on the table, people are hungry elsewhere in the world', a part of you turns off in disbelief, but actually you carry it around with you, not a burden, but a gift for the simple pleasures.

In my work at People Tree, I have lots of contact with the people who make our clothing and jewellery. I can see for myself the huge change Fair Trade can bring, sending children to school, bringing fresh water to people's homes, helping an illiterate family send their children to college – it draws on those life lessons from my mum.

Mother's Day is a great day to say thank you not only with a gift, but with an acknowledgement of how much they have helped form the fabric and values of our life.

Safia Minney

"She talked about the people as though they were family and close friends and in this way shaped my trust in humanity and brought down the barriers between our inner circle and the world"



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Our top rated picks from
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Hannah Clarke tried Diabetrose

supplements. Taken half an hour before each meal, Diabetrose helps break the fat storage cycle. When the sugar rush from eating reaches a particular level, our body realises we are not going to need the glycogen we have stored in our liver and converts this excess glycogen into fat. Diabetrose helps stop the hunger feeling and helps to fight the urge of eating in between meals. I tried this for a month and wasn't hungry between meals, felt a lot less sluggish and the biscuit tin stayed firmly shut! Costs £7.93, sweetcures.com

"My past life affects my current one as I hate conflict and try to avoid it"

imaginary door and to firmly shut it behind me. She asked me where was I and what could I see? I was at the Coliseum in Rome and I was a gladiator getting ready to fight. I was terrified as it was a case of kill or be killed. I discovered my past life affects my current one as I hate conflict.

Great for anyone who wants to know how and why their past has made them into the person they are today. One session is £60, colchesterhealer.co.uk

Nailing it. We agreed our nails are looking better and feeling stronger than ever! In the last month we've supplemented vitamin D, so we asked Rob Hobson, Healthspan's head of

nutrition, whether this was the reason. "Vitamin D is essential to maintaining healthy strong bones and teeth as it is required for the absorption of calcium," he says. "Diet is very important for strong nails but there is no reliable evidence to suggest that a supplement will make you nails grow faster or longer." Hmmmm... we still think it's the supplements!

Natalie Costello had past life regression.

I was nervous but my therapist Monica Nias soon put me at ease. She talked me through a relaxation exercise and soon I was in a semi-conscious state. I was told to walk through an



Editorial assistant Lucy Trevallion went to Ashdown Park Hotel in Sussex.

If you're a fan of period dramas this is the place to go. In the daytime take your tea on the terrace in the sunshine, stroll the grounds, have an afternoon

dip in the pool, or perhaps read a novel from the sumptuous comfort of your four poster bed.

The Neo-Gothic mansion itself was built in 1815 and is set in the beautiful East Sussex countryside, just 30 minutes outside of London. While you're there you could also

try out its gym, sauna and steam room. The spa offers great treatments, of which I tried the antioxidant vitamin C facial by Kerstin Florian, which used natural spirulina algae to give my skin a healthy glow. It's the perfect getaway to de-stress.

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ROAD TO RECOVERY

For the past 10 years I have suffered with chronic back and neck pain and I was finally diagnosed in 2012 at the age of 31 with degenerative disease of the spine and a severe prolapsed disc of the neck and lower back. So severe was it that a fall or sudden jolt could severely damage / sever my spinal cord and leave me paralysed. I was taken into hospital and had major spinal surgery on my neck. After a slow, painful recovery, heavily reliant on strong painkillers, I was still not better. It was then discovered I needed further surgery. Another period of recovery followed and during this time I was given your magazine to read and although I had never been one to exercise regularly, I decided enough was enough. I hired a personal trainer, who has been an inspiration and from the beginning of this year also took up running. I have entered my first 5k race this March with my husband. A year ago I was in a wheelchair. It's been a long road to recovery but I am loving my new healthier lifestyle and I could not have done it without regular boosts of inspiration from your magazine. Thank you!

Michelle



STRESS THE POINT

I really enjoyed Janey Goddard's article *Inflammation Overload* (March 15). I can definitely see this in our modern lives as a cause for concern! I look back at the times in my life when I have become ill and I am amazed to realise the links with my stress levels at these times. Stress is our bodies enemy when it comes to healthy balance. As Janey says, inflammation can even cause chronic health conditions. I think we can all learn the pathways to good health by avoiding stress at all costs. We all know it isn't easy, but forewarned is forearmed! Let's not sweat the small stuff and focus on protecting ourselves from this serious hidden danger. Thank you for yet another great, thought-provoking article. **Caroline**

NEW DISCOVERY

I recently came across a copy of *Natural Health* magazine whilst I was at my chiropractors. I fell in love with the concept behind it and decided I would try and contact you to tell you I loved the variety of articles, especially the recipes, and having had a browse of your website I was blown away!

Cat



TWEET OF THE MONTH

@GreenSqMile
Great article from @natural_mag about how to #waste less #paper! #reduce #reuse #recycle

@eloisebalazs

@emma_cannon loved your article 'damp solutions' in @natural_mag extremely interesting and helpful information, thank you!

A NATURAL ALTERNATIVE

My wake up call came five years ago when my husband was diagnosed with cancer. As a family we became more conscious about what we were not only eating but also the toiletries and creams we were using and any holistic therapies and alternative medicine that could aid his recovery. Magazines like *Natural Health* supported the process and my husband was nursed into health with a combination of conventional and holistic therapies. Now with a little one, we are even more careful of the choices that we make.

When he developed dermatitis in his face, the doctor prescribed steroid cream. I did not want to argue with a professional but it didn't help, in fact, it made it worse. That was when I followed my instinct and tried something more natural – coconut oil. Its antibacterial properties did the trick and cleared the problem without the 'nasties' associated with steroids. Thank you for giving me choices and being so inspiring. Keep up the good work! **Ruth**

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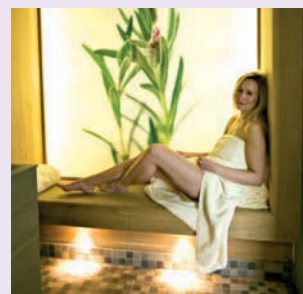
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TAURUS



April 21 - May 20

You'll want to stick to your own course, but may find some resistance to your plans and opinions. Play it cool. Remember you need a chance to recharge your batteries and do some planning. Mars in your own sign all month will give you courage to take the initiative.

GEMINI

May 21 - June 21

At times you'll feel as if you are trying to sail ahead with the anchor dragging, so pace yourself. From the 11th you will enter into the social whirl. After mid month you'll keep your own counsel. And from the 20th you need to take a well earned break.

LEO

July 24 - August 23

Your sunny self-confidence will see you sailing high above difficulties in the first week. All month you'll have your hands firmly on the wheel and expecting everyone around to work as hard as you. Later you'll be in a higher profile position, taking the lead and finding others follow behind.

CANCER

June 22 - July 23

Money news will be good, though you'll be swept along by sudden changes in your career. You'll be less sociable after the 11th. Around the 19th friends may tempt you into a scheme that sounds too good to be true. It probably is so save your money.

VIRGO

August 24 - September 23

A warm feeling of satisfaction will give you a lift on the 2nd. Though you'll be pushing hard to get better agreements financially and emotionally, you'll go through a bumpy few days until the 8th. An enthusiastic few weeks will start on the 20th.

Your Stars...

Find out what the planets have in store for you this April

LIBRA

September 24 - October 22

Your optimism will be high though close partnerships will go through a sticky first week. You'll insist on going your own way; try not to burn bridges behind you. Behind the scenes you'll be digging in your heels, refusing to give way until you reach fairer agreements.

AQUARIUS

January 21 - February 19

One close partner will offer advice and support as you hurtle through a busy everyday schedule. You'll be inclined to speak bluntly which won't always go down too well. Try not to get dragged into arguments. You'll snuggle down comfortably after the 20th for a quiet few weeks.

SCORPIO

October 23 - November 22

Early on, your efforts at work will pay off handsomely but there will also be obstacles to overcome. Take sudden changes in your stride and you'll sail through unscathed. Mars in your opposite sign all month will attract fairly fiery and argumentative people. Hard work will keep you focused.

PISCES

February 20 - March 20

Jupiter will bring you enthusiastic support but you're likely to be a touch hasty in the first few days. Try not to get into a situation where you can't backtrack. Key decisions need careful consideration and not snap judgement. After the 11th home will be amiable and affectionate.

SAGITTARIUS

November 23 - December 22

Loved ones may be behaving in a surprising way so leave them to their own devices. You'll let your hair down and suit yourself. Just remember your energy is not limitless and you have practical matters which can't be ignored. Boost your stamina when you can.

ARIES

March 21 - April 20

An unsettled, fast-moving start to the month will keep you on your toes. Lucky Jupiter will boost your social self-confidence. Try to avoid taking a gamble on the 18th thinking you can't lose. The final 10 days will focus your mind on pleasure and security.

CAPRICORN

December 23 - January 20

A generous gesture or present will make the start of your month though there'll be upheavals at home. Go with the flow. You'll be tempted by rich and sweet food after the 11th so up your exercise regime. Your sense of humour will bring you popularity after mid month.



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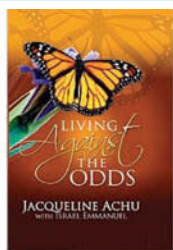
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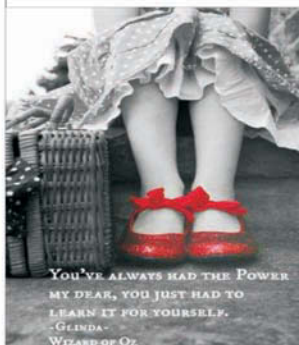
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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

Sue Pash began her studies
with the school in 2004.

I am a therapist who loves continuing to learn about complementary therapy – and SNHS has proved invaluable for adding to my skills. The courses make great ongoing CPD tool. Since becoming a student in 2004 I have taken several courses and gained the confidence to write the Holistic Dowsing Course for the school. In association with my therapist colleagues, I am now also proud to offer mentoring services for the school's students, offering practical sessions in many of the course subjects, together with business mentoring and seminars in Practice Management. This year my business has expanded again by adding a second Practice room, run in partnership with a fellow graduate of the school.

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Jane Alexander

If you only do one thing this month...

...take a break from the white stuff

I have tried quitting sugar so many times, I've lost count. Over the years, several natural health practitioners have pinpointed it as one of my 'problem' foods but, as anyone who's tried will know, it's just so darn hard to give up. It's not so much the obvious sugars (I can resist sweets, chocolate, cakes, cookies) but those pesky hidden sugars that sneak into virtually everything you buy (from yoghurt, cereal and bread to pasta sauces and stock cubes). Even too much natural sugar can cause problems for some people – and I'm one of those unlucky ones: overload me on supersweet fruit and my stomach balloons.

So, when The Body Retreat invited me on their new sugar detox programme, I grabbed the chance. Co-founder Juls knows first-hand how sugar can hurt the body and she explains that, when we give it up, the first few days are often the hardest, as sugar cravings start kicking in and there can be a 'healing crisis' as your body starts to detox. "It's at this point that most home programmes fail," she says. I can attest to that. But, away from home and temptation, I found it remarkably easy.

Okay, so the diet was green, very green and (maybe too much information here) my bowels became a bit Shrek-like too, but it all tasted good and three meals and three healthy snacks kept hunger at bay. Yes, I felt tired but that was to be expected as my body adjusted.

I started noticing the benefits after just two days. My skin and eyes looked clearer and my digestion settled

down. By the end of the retreat I had lost an incredible nine pounds, and many inches, in just four days. Juls carefully explained how to continue the plan at home and I left with recipes and shopping lists. The good news is that you don't have to live on broccoli and kale forever; you can even reintroduce wine and decent chocolate by week four on the programme.

I was surprised to find that, once home, I didn't slip. Whether it was because my taste buds had recalibrated, or because Juls' hypnotherapy session had tweaked my unconscious mind, I don't know – but I calmly waved the packet aside when my son offered me a Haribo – to his (and my) intense surprise.

Three weeks on and my body feels entirely different. But even more amazing is the effect on my mind. As if by magic, my brain fog cleared – I haven't felt as clear and focused as this in decades. My concentration has improved and I feel generally much calmer – no more wild mood swings. Plus I'm sleeping like a kitten.

If you can't run to the cost of a retreat, you can sign up for a free home programme on The Body Retreat website. So, go on, give your body and mind a truly delectable treat and shun the white stuff: thebodyretreat.co.uk

Jane Alexander is the author of numerous books on health and wellbeing. Check out her Amazon bookstore. She tweets as @exmoorjane and is on Facebook as eJaneAlexander

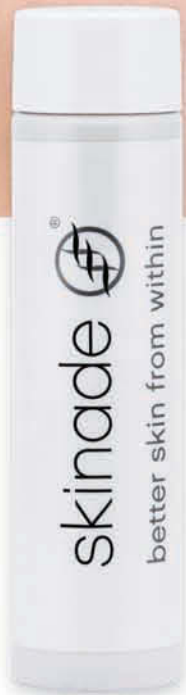


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